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UNIVERSALISM:

ITS

DOCTRINES

AND THEIR

FOUNDATIONS.

BY

REV. L. J. FLETCHER.

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PREFACE.

THIS work completes a doctrinal series intended for the use of Universalist Sunday-schools.

This book, intended for the most advanced classes in our schools, presents a different method for study and instruction from that adopted in the other parts of the series, the author being confident that the change was demanded by the nature of the subjects herein presented, and by the class of minds for whose consideration these pages are prepared. Any subject, the consideration of which involves a presentation of evidence, or an argument to show its truthfulness, can be more clearly set forth and fully considered in lectures, or connected statements of its different parts and relations than in chapters of questions and answers, and to a class of earnest and intelligent minds it will be much more interesting in the first-named form. That method is adopted in this book, and the lessons should be considered as follows: the teacher should read to his

class the lesson for the day, with an effort to make all its important points stand out as clearly to view as possible. Previous study will be indispensable to faithful performance of this work; for many suggestions will be needful as he proceeds, and those he should have ready in his mind for the occasion.

In a book like this, all cannot be written which should be made known to a class studying the doctrines herein presented. The prominent ideas and facts are set forth by the author, and these will suggest to an efficient teacher many things important for the class to know, which he should be prepared to mention in the proper place.

If the teacher and the class should prefer, the class may read the lesson, pausing for such explanations as the teacher desires to give; but one thing should not be neglected: *the lesson should be carefully studied* before a question is asked concerning it.

One thing more should not be neglected. Questions, set down by the author, will be found at the foot of each page, adapted to that part of the lesson which that page presents, but not all the questions which the teacher should ask. In those parts of the book where certain facts in nature are introduced to make the subject more clear, or to prove a point set forth as truth, the teacher should inquire for other facts in nature teaching the same lesson; and where Scripture is quoted, he should never fail to have the class turn to the

passage and consult the context; nor should he fail to ask for other Scripture testimony.

The great doctrines of Universalism are set forth in this book, yet there are certain interesting topics connected with our faith not discussed in these lessons, through fear of making the volume too large and expensive. But, if the young men and ladies of our congregations will become familiar with those truths herein considered, and with the reasons herein set forth for a belief in them, they will be able to give an intelligent reason for the faith that is in them.

The author would say to those teachers who shall use this book, Talk much with your classes. Oral instruction is always pleasing to the young, and in the Sunday-school especially it is most useful.

May this book give light to many inquiring minds, and joy to many anxious hearts!

L. J. F.

UNIVERSALISM.

LESSON I.

FAITH IN GOD.

My young friends, a belief in God is not only essential, but fundamental, in every system of Christian faith. As Christians, we believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God; * and you will see that, if we did not believe in God, we could not think of Jesus, as his Son. As Christians, we believe that God sent his Son into the world, "that the world through him might be saved;" † and faith in God is the foundation of that doctrine.

QUESTIONS.

1. What is essential in every system of Christian faith?
2. Who do we say that Jesus is?
3. Could we say that, if we did not believe in God?
4. As Christians, what do we believe in regard to the mission of Jesus?
5. What is the foundation of that doctrine?

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* St. John x. 26. † St. John iii. 17.

Indeed, the whole structure of Christian faith rests on the alleged fact that God exists. All the obligations of the moral law rest in this fact. The doctrines of punishment and forgiveness, of atonement and reconciliation, of regeneration and salvation, of the resurrection and immortality, all presuppose and grow out of a belief in God.

In this book we are to consider the principles of Christian doctrines, especially as they are held by those who believe in the final holiness and happiness of all mankind; and we will first inquire on what our faith in God depends. By doing this, we shall imitate the example of all wise master-builders, and look to our foundation, before we proceed with the superstructure.

And now, that you may see the importance of this work, let me ask you if you can give good and sufficient reasons for cherishing a belief in God? You may not doubt that God exists; but if you should meet with those who did cherish such doubts, you should be able to present such reasons for your own faith as

QUESTIONS.

6. On what does the whole structure of Christian faith rest?
7. What doctrines can you name which rest especially on a belief in God?
8. How should Christians seek to imitate wise master-builders?
9. Should we all be able to give a reason for our belief in God?

would give light to their darkened minds and banish all their unbelief.

Let us consider some of the evidences on which we may rely to prove that there is an intelligent and overruling power, which we call God. When we first open our eyes upon this world, we are greeted with an evidence that God exists.

The light strikes upon the eyes and by its aid we see the objects by which we are surrounded. The eye would be useless without the light, the light would lose the greater half of its utility if there were no eyes for it to penetrate. This clearly indicates that the eye and the light were created with reference to each other. And if we look closely into this matter, we shall find that the adaptation is real and marvellous in its perfection. The lenses of the eye, to refract the light; the retina of the eye, to act as the object glass on which the pictures of external objects are formed; and that property of light which makes its refraction possible, show clearly an adaptation of one to the other. Again, the

QUESTIONS.

10. If we have no doubts in regard to it, is not that enough?

11. Can we learn of the existence of God through his works?

12. What can you say of the adaptation of light to the eye?

13. Is the eye also perfectly adapted to the light?

14. Explain this as fully as you can?

eye is a very tender and sensitive organ. If the rays of light were not composed of particles almost infinitely small, we could not endure them for a single moment, for they come with inconceivable velocity. If one particle of light was a millionth part as large as the smallest grain of sand, our eyes would be destroyed the instant we should open them.

Once more, we may observe, that, blended with the rays of light, are rays of color. Certain objects in the world around us are so constituted that they absorb certain of those rays, and reflect the others. Some objects reflect one color and some another, and those that are reflected we are able to see; so that all the beauty of earthly things so pleasing to the eye, and all the varieties of color by which we are surrounded, are connected with the economy of light, and come to us through the

QUESTIONS.

15. Could there be such an adaptation of one thing so evidently created for and suited to another, without a wise mind to design and adapt them?

16. What peculiarity of light is worthy of notice, showing this adaptation?

17. What can you say of design and adaptation as shown in rays of color, and the power of different objects to absorb or reflect them?

18. Would the world be as beautiful and pleasing to us as it now is, if everything was of the same color?

19. In the fact that there is a variety of colors, which are blended with the sun's light, and in that other fact that earthly objects reflect or absorb them, what truth is apparent?

eye. Here is an unmistakable adaptation of light to our organs of vision; and if so, then was there a mind to adapt the one to the other, at the time when the two were created. That mind we call our God.

Secondly, let us observe that in the first breath we draw we have an evidence that God exists. The atmosphere is found to be perfectly adapted to the lungs. We should never have drawn our first breath if there had been no atmosphere; and if it had been a *liquid* instead of an invisible gas, or if it had been composed of different materials, or had

QUESTIONS.

20. If there was no light, of what use would our eyes be to us?

21. If we had no eyes, of what use would the light be to us? *

22. If there were no rays of color, of what use to us would be our love of the beautiful?

23. If we had no love of the beautiful, of what use to us would be the colors of the solar spectrum?

24. If there were no God, could all these nice adaptations exist?

25. In the first breath you ever drew, what fact was demonstrated?

26. Could you have drawn the breath of life if you had not been surrounded by the atmosphere?

27. In the adaptation of the lungs to the atmosphere, and the atmosphere to the lungs, what fact is clearly shown?

28. If the atmosphere was a liquid, could you breathe?

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* The light would do its work in the process of vegetation if we had no eyes; but the question refers to the laws of vision only.

been formed of different proportions of the same materials, we should not have lived a single day, perhaps not a single hour, in either case.

The physical constitution of man shows us conclusively that he was created to breathe; and so perfectly adapted is the atmosphere to this necessity and provision of his nature that the act of breathing is involuntary and free from any sensation of pain.

It is impossible to conceive of any adaptation more perfect than this; and to say that it happened to be as it is, or that chance was the cause of such results, is simply madness.

The wisdom of the laws of vision and of respiration, or breathing, is beyond our comprehension; and he who devised and adapted the economy of either one of those laws is worthy to be called our God.

QUESTIONS.

29. If its composition were changed, would not sad results to us follow?

30. If, then, the atmosphere is just what we need, just where it is needed, and indispensable to our life and happiness, could infinite Wisdom have adapted it to our wants any more perfectly than it is adapted?

31. What then do the laws of vision and the laws of respiration tend to prove?

NOTE. In the foregoing lesson and those that follow in this book, the teacher should consider the ability of his class to comprehend the details of the argument which is suggested. If it is thought to be for the best good of the class, the argument in the lesson can be greatly perfected by the teacher in additional and more minute illustrations.

For example, the teacher might explain more fully the construction of the eye, the refraction of light, the velocity with which light moves, the composition of the atmosphere, and the effect which the air has upon the lungs and upon the circulation of the blood. The more clearly that all these things are explained the more perfect will be the evidence showing a wise design in them, and therefore the necessity for a wise Designer.

In this book there will be found abundance of material to suggest subjects for oral instruction. Let no teacher fail to improve by such suggestions, and make each lesson as complete as possible.

LESSON II.

(FAITH IN GOD)—CONTINUED.

IN our last lesson, we considered some of the reasons for our belief in God. To-day we will continue the same subject, and see what other evidences are given us, by which to strengthen our faith.

The field from which to select our witnesses is so extensive that I scarcely know to what portion of it I had best direct your attention; but let us begin by saying that we are so constituted as to require food for our material natures. (Our necessities, in that direction, are so great that, if we did not obtain food,

QUESTIONS.

1. What does our physical nature require each day of life?

we should die. By some power and by some direction food is provided for us, and the requisition is answered. The earth's soil was made productive and her fruits and grains respond to our hunger. We are, at times, thirsty, and could not long subsist if our thirst were not quenched. Water answers to that demand of our nature, and is found in such abundance, that it comes gushing up from flowing springs beneath our feet. Nothing answers to that demand so perfectly as water, and no supply, for our thirst, is so abundant and so universally present in all the earth.

We grow weary by our necessary toil, and our physical nature needs repose and sleep. Night comes at regular and desirable periods, and brings with it silence and darkness, thus giving us the opportunity for the rest and sleep that are indispensable to our existence.

QUESTIONS.

2. How great are our necessities in that direction?
3. Do we find that any provisions are made which respond to those necessities?
4. What provisions, and how are they made?
5. Have we any other physical want which must be supplied?
6. Is any provision made for satisfying that want?
7. What provision, and how made?
8. Is the food we eat and the water we drink as perfectly adapted to our hunger and thirst as we could wish them to be?
9. What effect does our necessary toil have upon us?
10. Is there any provision which responds to our need of rest and sleep?

In each of these provisions, there seems to be an adaptation; and when we look at the subject with more attention, we shall find that the adaptation is very nice and perfect. The food we eat contains the nourishment which our bodies require; but that nourishment can be extracted from it and imparted to the body only by the process of digestion, absorption, and the circulation of the blood; and, wonderful to say, we are all provided with the organs by which these processes are carried forward. Just what we need, just what is indispensable to our existence, has been provided for us. And there is something beyond all this, which tells of adaptation and design. We have the sense of taste, which makes us turn with loathing and disgust from certain things, which otherwise

QUESTIONS.

11. Why is night a better season for rest and sleep than the daytime is?

12. In the regularity with which night comes to us, in the time of its continuance and in the intervals for labor, do you not see very nice and wise adaptations?

13. Could you conceive of any more desirable arrangement?

14. You said a moment since that food is necessary to the existence of the body. Tell me now how the nourishment which food contains is obtained for the use of the body?

15. Have we the organs by which those processes are carried forward?

16. If we were destitute of the organs which are requisite to either one of those processes, could we live?

17. What do such provisions and adaptations show?

we might feel inclined to eat; but everything which is necessary to satisfy our hunger is pleasant to our taste. We see, therefore, that food is provided to answer to our hunger, and provided in such a manner as to be adapted to our taste. The same beautiful and welcome adaptation to our taste is found in the nature of water. It is clear, pure, and free from any offensive or unpleasant flavor, so that we taste it with ever-recurring pleasure.

Notice now the adaptation of the sense of touch to our condition and necessities of life. We are so situated that we must come in contact with, handle, and examine the different material objects of this physical world. Some of them are delicate and frail, and must be handled with the nicest care, while we are required to lay hold upon other objects with a firm and powerful grasp; and our touch is so nice that it detects the slightest im-

QUESTIONS.

18. What peculiarity is there in the food which we are required to eat which makes eating a pleasure?

19. Is there, then, an adaptation between the food we eat and the sense of taste?

20. How is it with our taste and the water we are required to drink?

21. Could you believe that such a perfect and desirable adaptation came without any direction?

22. What can you say of the sense of touch, or feeling, as it is adapted to our condition and necessities?

23. Could there be anything more perfect than that sense by which we put ourselves in contact with external things?

pression, or contact with any object, yet does not cause us pain in the performance of the most laborious efforts.

In the sense of hearing we see another adaptation of means to ends,— a capacity answering to our necessities. We are eminently social beings, and our sense of hearing enables us to catch the words spoken by our friends, and thus facilitates the communion of mind with mind. This sense, also, is so delicate that it detects the secret whisper, and so protected against violence, that the piercing cry, or the loud notes of the rolling thunder, do not cause us pain. Again, it is the avenue of our sweetest pleasures. It conveys to the soul the treasures of melody and harmony, of which we could know nothing, if this sense had not been given us; and it enables us to listen to, and distinguish from all others, the voices of friendship and love.

I notice as the closing subject for consideration in this lesson, and as the most remark-

QUESTIONS.

24. Give some instances showing to what extent the sense may be cultivated?

25. How does the sense of hearing minister to our necessities?

26. In our naturally healthy state, how perfect is this sense?

27. Of what is it the avenue, or what good does it minister to us?

28. What other still more remarkable illustration of design and adaptation can you now mention?

able illustration of design and adaptation yet considered, the wonderful connection between our minds and our physical organs. The eye conveys to the brain a faithful impression of the objects upon which it looks. The ear conveys to the brain a true idea of the sounds and words to which it listens. Our senses of taste and smell give to the mind a knowledge of the qualities of substances, which we should appropriate as harmless and desirable, or shun as useless and dangerous. Our touch completes the test, by which we know of external objects, and then, having the knowledge, it becomes needful that it should result in action. For example, we see a delicious fruit, at a little distance from us, and desire to taste its sweetness. We hear the alarm of approaching danger, and desire to escape. We smell the fragrance of the flower, and would pluck it, that we may retain the treasure. In each of these cases we need to make a physical effort. Our hands and our feet must be put in motion. Now what shall move them? How singular, how wonderful,

QUESTIONS.

29. How do we know the form and color of the objects around us?

30. How do we know the words which others speak, or the character of any sound to which we listen?

31. How does the mind choose between the articles of food which it would have the mouth accept?

32. What is necessary after the senses have informed the mind?

how indicative of a wise Designer, is the fact that every organ of the body is connected with and controlled by the brain! The necessity of action is conveyed from the eyes, ears, fingers, or other organs, along the nerves, to the brain; and then the brain sends forth a directed power, through the nerves, to the different members of the body, causing them to act.

The necessity of something like this is apparent, the provision responding to that necessity is perfect; and if we are overwhelmed with admiration, in view of such an incomprehensible, delicate, powerful, and every way desirable economy of impressions, thoughts, and actions, how preposterous it is to doubt that an all-wise Designer conceived and executed the matchless union of those parts of which we are composed!

The arm of itself could not move itself. The eye of itself could not open and close, or move to the right, or left, taking upon its lenses certain objects at pleasure; and it is, therefore, certain that the power by which

QUESTIONS.

33. Can the body, or any member of the body, act of its own volition and power?

34. With what is every member of the body connected?

35. Does the brain, as the organ of the mind, give direction to all our actions

36. Can we move a hand, a foot, or an eye, in any desired direction without an effort of the mind to direct the act?

they are moved, must have been adapted to the work which it has to perform. That adaptation is superhuman, and we call the one to whom it is attributable, our God.

QUESTIONS.

37. Is not such an adaptation an existing fact altogether above your comprehension, and therefore evidently the work of an infinite mind?

LESSON III.

FAITH IN GOD.—CONTINUED.

In your first two lessons you found that there are existing certain provisions and adaptations, which must have been provided and adapted. You must have seen very clearly that, since those provisions and adaptations present a display of wisdom altogether beyond the comprehension of man, they must have originated in a superior intelligence. That intelligence must have known what the eye would need and what it would be able to bear, when light was created. And when the eye was formed, the nature and power of light

QUESTIONS.

1. When light was created, and adapted to the eye, what knowledge was necessary to the accomplishment of that work, besides a knowledge of light?

must have determined the formation and adaptation of that organ of vision. Some intelligence above our own must have so made the ear that it would catch the vibrations of air and carry to the brain an interpretation of sound. Some mind must have thought of the wants of man, when food and water were created, and must have thought of the nature of food and water when the mouth, the taste, the stomach, and other organs of the human body were created. We have concluded that such a mind must be infinite in its wisdom, and from such facts and conviction, we are disposed to say, it is the mind of God. The evidence we have thus far considered produces this conviction. But there are other evidences that will help to make such convictions still stronger, and we will name some of them in this lesson.

We are social beings. Our organization and powers show very clearly that we were

QUESTIONS.

2. When the eye was formed to receive and refract the rays of light, what knowledge was necessary in addition to that which related to the eye?

3. Then does it not follow that He who knew of the eye before it was created was possessed of superhuman intelligence?

4. What can you say of the adaptation of the ear to the vibrations of air? As we cannot understand that adaptation, must not the One by whom it was devised have possessed a wisdom higher than ours?

5. How do food and water in their adaptation to the mouth and the taste show a creating wisdom?

created to be social beings. Our powers of speech, our memory, our affection, our sympathies, our hopes, and our necessities, all show that we were made as one part of a grand social economy. Those with whom we meet in life are the other part of that economy, and thus it is perfect. I can speak to you, and you can hear my words. You can remember those words and can speak to me of them to-day, to-morrow, or next year. I see you in trouble and sympathize with you; you discover and appreciate my kindness, and, in return, give me your love. I need that love to make my life bright and joyous; so that we seem to be created for each other. And we are so created that each can express to the other the feelings moving and actuating

QUESTIONS.

6. What were we evidently created to be, as we stand related to each other?

7. What evidence have we that we were made to be social beings?

8. What shows that we are one part of a grand social economy?

9. What constitutes the other part?

10. I have power to speak to you. What is the response which shows that here is an adaptation of one being to another?

11. I see you in trouble and sympathize with you. What is the response?

12. If I speak and you hear, if I sympathize and get your love in return, is not this an adaptation of one to another?

13. In how many ways do we seem to be adapted to each other as social beings?

the soul, in words as well as in acts. Language is given as the expression of our thoughts, and we are cheered, comforted, instructed, and made happy, while we commune together. In heart and mind and tongue we respond to each other's wants, and contribute to each other's joys, as social beings; and in this, we see the result of design, an adaptation which must have been determined and wrought by some directing intelligence.

Again, we are moral beings. Much of our happiness depends upon the character of those by whom we are surrounded. If they seek to wrong and injure us, we do not rest in peace and security, but are tried, vexed, and annoyed by fear and anxiety. Their happiness also depends to a certain extent upon our character and acts. If we wrong them, we make them unhappy. It is therefore of great importance that all should deal justly by us,

QUESTIONS.

14. Must not the first man have been created with social powers? yes

15. If so, was he not evidently made in anticipation of others, who would also be social? yes

16. And if, when others were created, they were social beings, and just answered to his nature and wants, is it not evident that there was a mind to determine and direct in accomplishing that adaptation? yes

17. What are we more than social beings? moral

18. Upon what does much of our happiness depend?

19. How are we affected by the attempts of others to wrong and injure us?

20. Is the happiness of those around us affected by our character and actions? yes

and, to them, it is equally important that we deal justly. Now if we were so constituted that it would be for our good to be just and kind to others, and for their best good and happiness to be just and friendly to us, there would be a strong motive ever acting to make ourselves and others mutually interested and happy.

And are we not so constituted? Does not our purest joy result from our deeds of love to others? Does not our justice to our fellow-men give us a return of sweet and blessed peace? And, on the other hand, do not our acts of injustice make us unhappy and even miserable? Each day's experience teaches us that it is so; and here is one of the most striking and important adaptations that we have yet experienced. The necessities of others present the opportunity for our own increase of happiness; and others add to their joys by seeking to bless us.

Here is a law as plainly written in our natures as was ever a law upon the statute books of a State; and the things which are required are just the things to make those happy who obey the requirement.

QUESTIONS.

21. If that is so, should we not seek to do good to each other?

22. Do we find any law in our natures which is calculated to make us just to others?

23. Is the same law in *their* natures, acting to make them just to us?

You wish to be treated kindly, and if I am truly wise, I shall treat you kindly, because it will be the best thing which I can do for myself. Such a relation of cause and effect, of necessity, on the one hand, and motive, on the other, is a display of wisdom which proclaims an infinite intelligence.

Once more, let us remark that we are religious beings. We see how imperfect is our own wisdom, and we long to know that there is a higher thought than man can cherish. We can see and comprehend only a fragmentary part of the great system of nature with which we stand connected, and we feel that by some mind it should be all seen and understood. We feel how weak and insignificant we are, and long to know that there is an arm of power on which we can lean. We know that we cannot control the order of earthly events, or uphold that system by the opera-

QUESTIONS.

24. Yes; the motive is indeed threefold. We escape punishment by being just; we obtain happiness by being just; and we obtain the favor of others, whose friendship our justice secures. If it is the same with others as with ourselves, is not such an economy an evidence of all-wise design?

25. What other powers, or qualities of our nature, are worthy of notice in this place?

26. When we realize our own imperfect wisdom, what do we wish to know?

27. When we fail to comprehend the works of the material universe, of what do we wish to be assured?

28. In our human weakn[illegible] do we long?

tion of which our days, years, and temporal bounties are secured to us. If we believed that they were directed by no intelligence and controlled by no power, acting in conformity with a fixed purpose, we should have no confidence in their continuance, and should walk through life, fearing the results of every to-morrow. But the fact that we have no such fears, and that we repose in perfect confidence upon the power that moves and the purpose that directs the succession of material events, shows most conclusively that we have faith responding to our desires. All men have such faith, whatever their profession may be; and such a universal conviction cannot result from accident or chance. And here is a double confirmation of the fact that God exists. The order of material things, so indispensable to us, is directed and moved forward with undeviating precision. The necessity and the fact are perfectly responsive; while our need of faith in a higher intelli-

QUESTIONS.

29. Can we control the order of events, or uphold that system of things by which our blessings come to us?
30. Have we any fears that the order of events will not continue?
31. In what, then, do we trust?
32. Could we trust if we did not feel assured that there is an overruling Intelligence, who understands and directs all things?
33. What does the fact that we have such trust tend to prove?

gence and power is answered by the universality of that faith. A man may say that he does not believe in God; yet he will have perfect confidence in the succession of events upon which his life and happiness depend. Those events must have some direction, and be ushered in by some power, and we say that power is God.

These are a few of the evidences which go to satisfy us that our faith in God is well-founded. But what we have here presented is only as a drop in the bucket compared with the vast amount which might be adduced; yet this will suggest much more testimony of a similar kind, and help you to be confirmed in your faith, and to enlighten others. In our next lesson we will talk of God as a Father; and our argument, thus far presented, will be strengthened and rendered still more satisfactory.

QUESTIONS.

34. And is not that evidence made stronger by the fact that all men have such trust?

35. State what confirmation we have, in all the evidence presented in this lesson, of our belief in God.

36. Have we presented all the evidences which nature and our own anticipated wants suggest, to prove that God exists?

37. What other evidence can you name, which has not been mentioned?

38. Can any one be a Universalist, and not believe in God?

39. Why not?

NOTE. Let the teacher dwell upon the subject of the

three preceding lessons until the argument is clear in every mind to which he ministers instruction. Bring up other evidences. Show the folly of talking about chance. Show as clearly as possible that there must be a directing Intelligence as the source of all the adaptations we have named.

LESSON IV.

GOD OUR FATHER.

It is a great and good thing to cherish faith in God. In our weakness it gives us strength; in our ignorance it assures us that there is a higher wisdom; and amid all the uncertainties of this life it makes us feel secure. When it storms, we can say, it will be clear and beautiful again. When the ground is parched and the skies are cloudless, we are confident that it will soon rain; for we say, God is at the helm and he can do his good pleasure.

Such a faith is just the thing for frail, imperfect mortals; for it helps us to walk erect when otherwise we should fear and tremble at every step. But if we could feel that God

QUESTIONS.

1. What does faith in God do for us?
2. When it storms and the tempest is raging, what does such faith enable us to say?
3. When there is drought and threatened scarcity and famine, if we have that faith, what can we say?

is our Father, how much more strength and joy that faith would give! Then we should know that we are indeed safe in his hand of power. Then we should know that his wisdom will devise the best methods for making us happy.

A father loves his children, seeks to do them good, delights to make them happy, and follows them continually with favors and mercies. When we consider the greatness of our earthly fathers' love, we are amazed that it can go so far and do so much for us; and if we could only feel that our earthly fathers have all the power and all the wisdom that they desire, and therefore that they can do for us just what their love prompts them to do, how we should rest in their desires and ability to bless us!

Now, therefore, if God is our Father, he has the wisdom and the power to do for us all that he may choose; and, as a Father, his love will prompt him to give us countless blessings.

QUESTIONS.

4. If we did not have such faith, how should we feel in the day of trouble, or threatened danger?
5. Would our faith in God be stronger still if we should believe him to be our Father? If so, why?
6. What does a father do for his children?
7. Are we ever amazed at the greatness of an earthly father's love?
8. If our earthly fathers had all the power they could desire to exercise, would they not give us every needed blessing?
9. Do we not believe that God has all power?

And is he not our Father? Could a father give his children greater evidences of love than God has given us? Let us look upon some of those manifestations, which show us the exceeding love of God.

We could have eaten the cherry, the apple, the peach, or the berry just as well, if it had not been painted in such beautiful colors. It would have tasted as sweet and nourished us as much. Why, then, were the colors of fruit necessary? Evidently to please the eye of man; for the beasts care not at all for beauty. The bright colors were added to give pleasure to the eye, which was so formed as to delight in them, and were not necessary for any other purpose that we can name. They were, therefore, clearly a gift of love. We may say the same of every flower that charms the sight, and of every thing of beauty in the earth. The grass would have furnished

QUESTIONS.

10. If, then, we knew he was our Father, should we not feel perfectly secure in his hands? Yes

11. Let us, then, see if we have any reasons for believing that God is our Father. To do this, upon what should we first look? some of those manifestation

12. Are the beautiful colors of the apple, cherry, peach, or strawberry, essential to their sweetness, or their nutritious qualities?

13. Why, then, were their beautiful colors added, if they were not indispensable? to make them look pretty

14. Does the eye of man delight in beautiful colors? Yes

15. Does beauty impart a charm to life, and a joy to the soul of man?

as sweet and wholesome food to the animal, if it had been drab color, as it now does. The forests would have given as cool a shade and would have furnished as excellent timber and fuel, if all their leaves had been black, as they now do. The heavens would have performed all their useful offices, if they had presented us with a background of yellow, on which no silver or golden cloud should ever float. The rainbow is not a thing of use, which ministers to any of our physical necessities; yet what delight does it impart to every lover of the beautiful!

We see, therefore, that the red cheeks of the cherry, the charming colors of the rose, the lovely hue of fields and skies, the variegated landscape, and all the beauty of this world, is a gift superadded to all the indispensable favors which are provided for us.

QUESTIONS.

16. Does beauty perform any other mission in the earth than that of ministering to the love of the beautiful which exists in human souls?

17. Suppose the grass of the fields had been drab color, the forest-leaves black, and the skies yellow, would they not have answered the great purposes of leaves, grass, etc.?

18. Would they have been as welcome to our sight, and would they have given us as much joy, as their glorious beauty now imparts?

19. Is the rainbow a thing of use? If not, why does God hang it out upon the clouds?

20. What do we learn from this ever-present gift of beauty, which neither feeds, clothes, nor warms us, which is superadded to all our indispensable blessings?

No father could manifest a fonder love than is here shown, in the sweet gift of beauty. We could have done without it; but as it would add to the charms and joys of life, it was created and scattered all around us. We can but say that such a gift displays a Father's love. Consider, now, the laws by which melody and harmony are produced. We could live without one strain of melody, and without one harmonious combination of sounds; and if we had never heard them, we should not miss them. But all sweet sounds add a new joy to life; and, as we listen, harmony and melody come floating to us on every breeze. Could an earthly father show us a clearer evidence of his love than we have of God's love in this precious gift? We might notice very many illustrations of this kind, but we will pass to say that the care which is exercised over us, by a power higher and mightier than man possesses, exhibits

QUESTIONS.

21. Could a father manifest a sweeter and more tender love than is shown in this response to our love of beauty?

22. Does not this ever-present gift display a Father's love?

23. Are sweet sounds necessary to our existence in this world?

24. Should we have felt any consciousness of loss or neglect, if we had never listened to harmony or melody?

25. Are not the joys which music imparts a gift superadded to the indispensable blessings of this life?

26. Could a Father's love have provided a sweeter source of joy for his children than music is to us?

such unwearying love that it seems, in kind, like that which our earthly fathers exercised, when in our infancy they bent over our cradles, carried us in their arms, and anticipated all those wants for which they could provide.

This care brings to us the seasons of seed-time and harvest, with their opportunities and their bounties; it brings us day and night, with their most perfect adaptations to our necessities; and these are very gracious gifts; yet we must notice exhibitions of love still more tender, yearning, and paternal. When we are unmindful of the power which provides for and protects us, the provision and protection are continued just the same; when we disobey the laws of our nature, abuse ourselves, and show our disregard of Him who created us, we are not left to accomplish our ruin, but watched over still, provided for, warned of our danger, healed of our wounds, and blessed by influences which act to reform and save us.

When our thoughts are all centred upon

QUESTIONS.

27. Do we not know that there is exercised over us a constant care and watchfulness?
28. What is it like, or what does it resemble, in kind?
29. Is it greater or less than the care which an earthly father exercises?
30. What does it do for us?
31. Does it do this when we are unmindful of its favors?
32. Suppose that we are ungrateful and even abuse the blessings given us?

those things which do not make for our peace, and even when we seek for them against our own convictions of duty and right, the unseen and ever-watchful Power is with us still, keeping our pulses throbbing, our hearts beating, our blood flowing, and our breath still feeding the fountains of life. This is done for us, day after day and year after year, and we know that nothing less than a Father's love could so pursue and invest us with care and blessings. And we must not fail to notice a still more wonderful display of this great love. An earthly father might watch his child during a succession of many days; and, beginning at the early dawn of every morning, pursue him with mercies until the hour of darkness. Then he would grow weary, and sleep would overpower his anxious love, and his care and protection would cease. But over us there is an Eye that never slumbers; a power that keeps us in the darkness as in the light; that never wearies and never falters in its loving care. We know that such love must be the purest, strongest, and holiest possible, and

QUESTIONS.

33. How is it in the night-time and amid the darkness?
34. When we sleep and have no care for ourselves, what is done for us?
35. Could an earthly father, if he had the power, do more than that for us?
36. Could anything less than a Father's love so pursue, invest, guard, inspire, and bless us?
37. Could an earthly father do all these things for us?

we call it parental love. We know that it comes to us from God, and we therefore know that God must be a Father to us. So much may we learn from nature and our own experiences; and when we turn to the revelations made to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ, the same great truth is repeated and confirmed.

As this is not the place for the Scripture argument upon this point, we will close this lesson by saying that if God were visibly present, leading us, guiding us, providing for us, watching over us, folding us upon his bosom and impressing upon our lips his kisses of sweet affection, his fatherly love, though more fully revealed to our senses, would be no more real than it now is. We therefore say that God is our Father; and the yearning soul, like a weak and trusting child, accepts the glad assurance, and flings itself into the unseen arms of the ever-present Friend.

QUESTIONS.

38. Who, then, is our ever-watchful, ever-loving, and bountifully gracious Friend?

39. This is indeed the conviction which nature and our experience force upon us; and have we any other evidence of the same welcome truth?

40. Yes; we shall speak more of that evidence in another part of this book. One question more is all I will now ask. What says the loving, weak, and yearning soul to the displays of care and mercy of which we have been speaking?

LESSON V.

THE WORD OF GOD.

If there is a God, of which I presume you have no doubts, and if we stand to him in the relation of children to a Father, then has he certain demands to make upon us, and unto him we owe obedience. This is a necessity of such a relationship; for every father, out of true love for his children, will give them a law to observe and keep. But how could God give a law to his children? How could he make himself manifest to them, and impress them with a sense of responsibility to him.

We live in an age, into which all the light of past ages is shining; and in that light we can learn of God in the works of nature, and become acquainted with his law in our experiences. But the first men and women, in the infancy of our race, were destitute of such light, and were obliged to begin with the alphabet of all knowledge. They could not have seen God's glory in the heavens, or his love and perfections in the earth. They could not have heard and interpreted his voice in

QUESTIONS.

1. If there is a God who stands to us in the relation of a Father, to his children, will he make certain demands of us? Yes
2. What shall we owe to him? obedience
3. What will the love of every father prompt him to do?

will have to obey + keep
are

their experiences, or understood that their earliest sorrows were the fruits of disobedience. As a necessity of their condition, they must have had everything to learn; of God, and of themselves. The question which we here repeat is an important one, and will prepare our minds to comprehend the necessity of special revelation.

The first man, whoever he was and wherever he was, had everything to learn, and no earthly being to instruct him. God stood to him in the relation of Creator and Father. He had created him for some purpose and therefore it was just and right that man should know of that purpose; else how could he accomplish it? As a Father, God must have loved his child, and that love would have prompted him to make known his will, and to teach man the way of obedience and happiness. Observe, that at that time, God must have directed the education of man, or he must have left him in absolute intellectual

QUESTIONS.

4. Could the first man have learned of the law of God from nature or his experience? yes
5. How can we learn of God in that way?
6. What must have been the intellectual and moral condition of the first man?
7. Whom had he to instruct him?
8. If God desired his love and service, would he not have given him instruction? yes
9. If God created him that he might accomplish some purpose, would he not have revealed to him the nature of that purpose? yes

and moral darkness. There was no other source of wisdom. How then, could God give man instruction? How, so well as by revealing himself to the senses of seeing and hearing? How, so well, as by coming to, and talking with, man?

God's glory might have appeared then, as now, in sun and stars; and his love might have been reflected from every smiling flower; yet man, in his primitive ignorance, would not have comprehended either the one or the other.

We can conceive of no way so natural and so probable by which God could have instructed his first created child of earth, as by talking with him. If, therefore, we should find in a history of our parents a statement to the effect that God did appear to, and talk with, them, we should be obliged to say that statement is at least probable. It is in harmony with the necessity of the case, and is just such an item of history as we might expect to find in a work going back to the first human experience.

QUESTIONS.

10. How could God give instruction to such a being as the first man must have been? By senses & feeling

11. Do we conceive of any other way so natural and probable? No

12. If we should find an ancient history in which we should read that God did come to talk with and instruct the first man, how would it seem to us?

13. Would not such a history be in perfect harmony with the necessities of such a case, so far as we can understand them? yes

If, now, we open our Bibles, we shall read just such a statement, in what professes to be the history of the first man and woman of our race. Let us mark, at this point, a few facts which are indisputable; for they will help us in our estimate of the word of God.

First, there must have been a first man; and as he could not have created himself, he must have had a creator. Second, he must have been placed in some portion of the earth, and from some source must have derived instruction. Third, being the first of our race, the present peoples must have descended from him, and he must therefore have had a woman to be his wife, and sons and daughters to commence the genealogy of the ages.

Now we read in the Bible, which is, at least, a very ancient history, that Adam was the first man. And who can tell us why he should not have been? Who can name another whose claim to primogeniture is better than his? Who can tell us of a more probable first man?

Again, we read in our Bibles that God created man; and if he did not, who was his creator? we read that the first man was

QUESTIONS.

14. Have we such a history? yes
15. Does that history tell us of a first man? yes
16. What can you say about the necessity of a first man?
17. Does that history say anything about his Creator? yes
18. Is such a statement in harmony with any necessity, and if so, with what?

placed in the Garden of Eden to dress and to keep it; and who has ever suggested a more probable locality or occupation?

In the Bible we are told that God came to man in the garden and talked with him and gave him instruction; and we have shown that this was just the most natural and probable method of instructing the first man which we could conceive.

In our Bibles we are told that Eve was the first woman, and the wife of Adam, and that their children are the head of a genealogy which can be traced through the first ages of the world and down to the present day. And if Eve was not the first woman, then who was the mother of our race? And if the present peoples of the earth do not go back with their lineage to Noah, Methuselah, Enoch, Jared, Enos, Seth, and Adam, from whom do they reckon the generations of the past?

Those who will read the first chapters of the Bible in the light of these suggestions will see very clearly how reasonable and probable the record is; and how some parts of it,

QUESTIONS.

19. Does that history tell in what place the first man was located? yes

20. Can any one name a more probable place?

21. Must there not have been a first woman as well as a first man? yes

22. Does the history of the first man, found in the Bible, tell also of a first woman? yes

23. Why should not Eve have been the mother of our race?

at least, are in harmony with facts resting in the nature of things. For example, we read that man was fashioned from the dust of the earth, and inspired or made alive by a breath, or spirit, from God; and we all know that our bodies are of the earth and will crumble back to dust again; and also that we have a spirit within us, which moves and controls the body, as God moves and controls the whole material universe. All these things go to convince us that the history in the first chapters of the Bible is true.

It seems to be just what we might expect to find in a truthful history of the primeval age, and we are bound by every principle of reason to accept it as such. It is the beginning of that record which we call the word of God; and we call it the word of God because it contains the words spoken by God to man. We shall talk more in regard to it in our next lesson.

QUESTIONS.

24. What can you say of the material out of which we are composed, and of the statement in the Bible that God made man from the dust of the ground?

25. What of the spirit of man, compared with the statement that God breathed into the first man the breath of life?

26. In the light of facts which are self-evident, how does the history found in the first chapters of the Bible seem to you?

27. What then are we bound to do in regard to it?

28. What do we call the record found in the Bible?

29. Why do we give it that name?

30. Do you see anything unreasonable in that part of it which relates to the creation and education of the first human pair?

LESSON VI.

THE WORD OF GOD.—CONTINUED.

If God gave man a law to keep, we should suppose that he would have attached a penalty to the act of disobedience thereof; and as we open our Bibles and read of the first law therein set forth as having been given to our first parents, we find a penalty attached thereto. We are told that God forbade to Adam and his helpmeet one tree of the garden, and said to them, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." They did eat, and just as we should have supposed, so, according to the record, the penalty was inflicted. Surely, the history is reasonable, thus far, and commands our credulity. But, as we proceed with our investigations, the evidence increases in the light of which we see the Bible as God's word. In the same connection, where we find a history of the punishment inflicted on Adam, there is a promise of redemption from the power of the tempter.

QUESTIONS.

1. If God gave man a law to keep, what should we expect to find attached to that law?
2. Does the history given in the Bible correspond with that idea?
3. What penalty was attached to the first law named in the Bible?
4. What promise do we find in connection with the hisory of that penalty?

How much is this like the dealings of a father with his child, who will punish in love, then kiss away the tears of the penitent offender! Nothing more clearly shows that the record is a faithful history of God's dealings with man than such an incident, where justice and mercy are so sweetly blended. In the record of the punishment inflicted upon Cain, there is another evidence that what we read in the first chapters of Genesis is God's word, for we find a perfect transcript of that record in God's dealings with every wicked man. The mark of their guilt is upon them, and in their remorse and anguish they cry as Cain did, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!" Probability is on the face of the record; it seems natural and lifelike, and we accept it for what it professes to be, — the word of God.

From what we see now of ignorant and superstitious men, it seems that it must have

QUESTIONS.

5. Of what does that blending of justice with mercy remind us?
6. What does it tend to show in regard to the record?
7. In what do we find a transcript of the penalty inflicted upon Cain?
8. What do all sinners say, when the weight and anguish of sin is upon them?
9. If the experience of all sinners is like that which is alleged of Cain, is it not reasonable to suppose that his experience was as the Bible represents?
10. So far as we read in the Bible of God's dealings with Adam and Cain, is not the account natural and lifelike? Do we not accept it as truth?

been necessary, in the earliest times, for God to have communed with his children very frequently; and the Bible tells us that he did. But as the people multiplied and spread abroad upon the earth, we should suppose that some written law would have been necessary, and the Bible tells us that such a law was given upon Mount Sinai. You see how human reason and the Bible history do, thus far, go hand in hand.

Again, our reason accords with the Scripture history, in the account given of miraculous manifestations in the days of Moses. We would suppose that a nation just emerging from a state of long-continued servitude, in a land where all the people were idol-worshippers would need to see frequent and wonderful displays of almighty power to keep them in constant remembrance of an unseen

QUESTIONS.

11. From what we know of ignorant and superstitious men, does it not seem that it would have been necessary for God to commune with man in the early ages quite frequently? Yes
12. Does the Bible report many instances of such communion? Yes
13. Does it not seem that a written law must have been necessary as the people increased in number upon the earth? Yes
14. Does the Bible say that such a law was given? Yes
15. What can you say of the Law given on Sinai?
16. Thus far, does not human reason declare that the Bible history is probable? Yes

God, whom they were required to worship. If they did not see the one to whom they were required to bow down, or hear his voice, they would require some other evidence of his existence and presence, in the absence of which, they might lose confidence in him and turn to follow other gods. This, I repeat, is a reasonable supposition; and in the history given in the Pentateuch we find that only in the presence of miraculous displays of God's power did Israel walk humbly and trustfully before God. The waters were rolled back at the Red Sea, and the rock was smitten at Horeb, not so much to give the people deliverance from Pharaoh, and to save from consuming thirst, as to convince them that the Lord was their God and powerful to keep and bless them. The record is in harmony with the necessity, and as it proclaims the acts of God, we say it is reasonable and accept it as the truth.

But we shall not find time to analyze all

QUESTIONS.

17. Should we not suppose that such a people as Israel must have been would have needed some superhuman displays of power to convince them that their God was superior to all gods, and was ever with them? yes

18. Does the Bible give an account of such displays of God's power? yes

19. Name some such items of Bible history.

20. Did those displays seem to answer to a religious want in the minds and hearts of Israel? yes

21. Is not such history in harmony with a necessity of such a time and people? yes

parts of the Bible, seeking for proof of its origin; nor do we need to attempt such a work. On almost every page we find some evidence that it is God's word, and we will notice those points only which present the strongest proofs.

In the law comprised in the Ten Commandments there is most conclusive evidence that God has spoken to man. As we consider those commandments, even in this day of intellectual and gospel light, they challenge our admiration and defy our criticism. We know, beyond all doubt, that they were given to the world in an age of comparative darkness and ignorance; and when we realize that they have been perfectly adapted to every subsequent age, the light of all legislators and the foundation of all law, we are assured that man did not and could not have originated them. Even the wisdom of Jesus discovered but one single addition that could be made to them, and with that addition, the Decalogue is perfect. In this fact we see it as the word of God. The world in every age has recog-

QUESTIONS.

22. In view of such a harmony, what are we disposed to call the history?
23. What do we find on almost every page of the Bible?
24. In the Ten Commandments what evidence do we find? God has spoken to man
25. Of what are they the foundation?
26. What improvement did Jesus make in them?
27. What do such facts show in regard to the origin and nature of the Decalogue?

nized the wisdom of its requirements and while all the noblest statutes have been repetitions of this primary law in other and various forms, the moral philosopher has based his theories upon the same and the only foundation.

Another evidence of the divine origin of the Scriptures is found in the fact that the writers ascribe to God all the honor and praise which is due to the great wisdom which they display.

If Moses had originated the Decalogue without divine aid, he would have claimed it as his own production; for it would have been the proudest monument to human wisdom ever erected. If he was a good man, he would have claimed the authorship of his own production; for a good man is honest. If he was a bad man, he would have claimed all the honors that belonged to him; for ambition holds unbounded sway in the evil-minded of this world. But another and still stronger

QUESTIONS.

28. Of what are all human statutes a repetition?

29. If man, of his own wisdom, had written the Ten Commandments, would he not have claimed to be the author of them?

30. To whom does the author of the Pentateuch ascribe the Ten Commandments?

31. Does not that seem like honesty, and does it not cause us to believe that the Commandments are the words of God?

32. Will a good man utter falsehood?

33. Would a bad man write and send forth a law every part of which denounced judgments upon himself?

argument comes from the suggestion that the writer of the Pentateuch was either a good or a bad man. First, we can see that if he was a good man, he would not utter falsehood. A good man will not lie; and as he says that the Ten Commandments were given by the Almighty God, then it follows that if they were not so given, the one who made the record was a bad man. Secondly, a bad man would not put forth a law denouncing and threatening judgments upon his own acts; and as the Ten Commandments do denounce all forms of wickedness, it is most evident that they did not originate in an evil mind; and if not, then must we give credit to the truthfulness of him who said, "The tables were the work of God and the writing was the writing of God graven on the tables."

In closing this lesson, let us notice two points in regard to the Old Testament Scriptures. First, the adaptation of the Mosaic law to the age in which it was given, and second, the superhuman wisdom of the prophecies.

QUESTIONS.

34. What do those facts show in regard to the Ten Commandments?

35. State the argument, presented in this lesson, touching the necessity of a material sacrifice in the earliest ages.

36. Do not the requirements set forth in the old Testament Scriptures show an adaptation to the religious wants of that age?

We can easily understand that in a semi-barbarous age, or among a people ignorant and superstitious, no clear conception of a purely spiritual worship could obtain. When we know how difficult it is for us to worship God in spirit and in truth, we can imperfectly realize how it must have been in the days of Moses, with such a people as were the sons of Israel. It was indispensably necessary that the thought of God should be continually in their minds; that they should be made to feel that he had great and just demands upon them and that he required of them much sacrifice. If we have need of line upon line and precept upon precept to keep us in remembrance of our duty to God, that people in such an age of darkness needed greater admonitions still; and as they were gross in all their conceptions of worship, a material altar and a material offering were necessary aids to that soul worship which God requires. Such a people, in feeling that they were under obligations to God for his protection and favor, would naturally think of cancelling that obligation by gifts to him; and the system of worship which required the offerings of turtle-doves, pigeons, lambs, goats, and bullocks, was just suited to such necessities. This system was an essential part of the Mosaic code, and as it helped men to think of God, as they came to give him their offerings, it accomplished a work which a purely spiritual ser-

vice could not have effected. In such an adaptation we see a schoolmaster, whose work it was to prepare the world for the coming of Christ, and that schoolmaster must have been given of God. It must have been God's word which said unto Israel, "an Altar of earth shall ye make unto me, and shall sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen. In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and bless thee." This is, indeed, little more than a suggestion of a great truth, which finds abundant illustrations to which we may refer when I come to talk with and question you of this lesson.

And now a few words of the Prophecies and we will leave the Old Testament Scriptures. We say that the wisdom which they evince must have been superhuman. How could Isaiah prophesy of the coming and the character of Jesus Christ in language which found an exact and literal interpretation a thousand years after it was uttered, if he were not instructed by divine wisdom? How could he have told from what root the living Branch would spring, saying as he did, so truthfully, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the

QUESTIONS.

37. Does it not seem to have been the word of God which required the Jewish sacrifices?

38. State the objects of the sacrifices and their probable effect.

stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of council and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord"? How could he have foretold his rejection by the Jews, his griefs and sorrows, the nature of his mission and the manner of his death? Such things he did foretell, and others quite as wonderful; and he was only one of many prophets, whose word must have been the word of the Lord. That word is in the Holy Bible, and we accept and trust in its truth.

QUESTIONS.

39. Present the whole argument by which it appears that the prophecies are the word of God?

NOTE. These questions do not cover the whole ground of this lesson, some important ones having been purposely omitted, that the teacher might supply them. There is much opportunity in this lesson for an interesting and profitable talk with the class and it should not be omitted.

LESSON VII.

THE WORD OF GOD.—THE NEW TESTAMENT.

WE come to talk to-day of the New Testament Scriptures. (In our last lesson, mention was made of the prophecies concerning Christ.

As good men predicted his coming,—men who were evidently under the influence of the divine Spirit,—we might expect to find, somewhere in the history of the past, an account of his appearing.

Again, as we consider the condition of the world at the time of the latest prophecies, we shall see that a new teacher and the example of a diviner life was absolutely necessary to the progress of the race in wisdom and goodness. If God directs the affairs of men and is influenced by love for them, he would give the agency to effect the end in view; and from such facts we should expect to find a history of such a teacher and of such a life.

Opening now the New Testament, we find, in connection with a reference to prophecy, an account of its fulfilment. We read of the conception, of the surprise and intentions of Joseph, of the talk which the angel had with him, and of the exact fulfilment of a predic-

QUESTIONS.

1. Did the prophets foretell the coming of Christ? yes
2. How long before the Christian era were such predictions made? 600 or years
3. What might those, who lived just before the beginning of the Christian era, and who had read the prophecies, have reasonably expected?
4. If we had never seen the New Testament, but had read and believed the Old, should we not say that there should be a record which should tell us of the promised Messiah?

tion made centuries before that time in which the Virgin is represented as the mother of the promised Saviour. Such a history setting forth such events, being just such as the facts of an earlier date might lead us to anticipate, is, at least, reasonable; and now we look to see if the facts connected therewith are consistent.

We should suppose that a being of whom prophets had prophesied for thousands of years, and whose immediate coming was foretold by an angel from heaven, would make his appearance in such a manner as to display some unusual recognition of the Almighty God, whose messenger he was to be; and as we read from the Gospels, we find that at his birth, angels descended from heaven, became visible to men, and sung their sublime chorus of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men." We should suppose that the birth of one destined to be the Saviour of the world would have been recognized by man and honored as such an event should be. As we read the Gospels, we

QUESTIONS.

5. If under such circumstances we should find a history purporting to be an account of the coming, teachings, and life of the One so long ago foretold, should we not say, before we had examined its contents, such a book is just what we might have expected?

6. Are there any facts set down in the Old Testament, which would suggest the necessity of a diviner teacher and a higher life than had been given in the Old Dispensation?

7. Why should we think it probable that under such circumstances God would give such a teacher and life?

find that the Persian Magi came from afar to worship him; that a new star announced to them his birth and nation; that the king was filled with fear because of him; that when he was carried to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord, after the manner prescribed by the Jewish law, Simeon, a devout and holy man, recognized him as the promised Messiah, and Anna, the prophetess, spake of him as the Redeemer of Israel.

Once more, we would expect to find in the childhood of such a being something unusual, —some display of wisdom and goodness which other children do not manifest; and in the history given by the Evangelists we do find that which corresponds most fully with such expectations. When but twelve years old, he entered the temple at Jerusalem and disputed with the learned doctors of the law, filling them with amazement because of his great wisdom; and he grew up pure in his life, and full of the Holy Ghost. Although

QUESTIONS.

8. If he did give such teacher, what should we, in this age, expect to find?
9. How does the New Testament answer to that expectation?
10. What do we find on opening to the first chapters of that Testament?
11. What fulfilment of prophecy is therein recorded?
12. Why is that record reasonable?
13. How should we suppose that such a being as the Christ of prophecy would come into this world?

we have not much history relating to his youth, that which is recorded in regard to him is just what we might expect to find in the history of such a child and youth. And now as we read of him in his manhood and ministry, lo, the wonderful events just in harmony with our idea of the life of such a being appear in the Gospels.

It was not strange that God should send down his Spirit in a visible form upon the one of whom the prophet said, "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him." It was not strange that God should say of him, "This is my beloved Son," since, at a time long previous to his coming, he had said of him, "Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth!" It was not strange that he, who came clothed with the power of God, who had all things given him of the Father, and upon whom the divine Spirit was poured without measure, should heal the sick, cure the blind, cast out evil spirits, and raise the dead; and the New Testament Scriptures tell us that Jesus did all those things. They tell us that he presented

QUESTIONS.

14. Does the description given in the Gospels correspond with that idea?

15. What can you say of the announcement made by the angel to Mary, and of the scene when the angels appeared to the shepherds?

16. What should we expect to find in such a history, touching the recognition by man, of such an event?

to the world a spotless life; that he displayed the love and mercy of the Father who sent him, and taught a doctrine in harmony with his life, — a doctrine calculated in the highest degree to exalt and bless those to whom he was sent as a Saviour. The Gospel account of him is perfectly in harmony with our best conception of the history of such a one as the world's Redeemer should be. The Gospels of the New Testament are therefore consistent with the work they profess to do. They give us a true picture of the probable Christ.

Again, they wrote of that which they profess to have seen and heard. When they wrote, there were those living who could and who would have contradicted their words and proved them false if they had not been true. Jews were living who were accused of being

QUESTIONS.

17. How does the New Testament record answer to such an expectation?

18. State all the circumstances by which the acts of men, in relation to the new-born Saviour, show him to have been something more than an ordinary child.

19. In the childhood of one whose birth was accompanied by such wonderful and divine manifestations, should you not expect to find unusual displays of wisdom and goodness?

20. What can you say of the New Testament history of the childhood and youth of Jesus?

21. So far as you can see, does the Gospel history correspond with your idea of the necessities of the age in which Jesus appeared?

the murderers of Jesus, and who would have repelled so grave a charge, and shown to the world that it was groundless, had it been possible for them so to do. In this fact we see the reasonableness of our belief in the four Gospels. We find another ground of faith in them, in the fact that there are four Gospels; that they were written by different men in different places and at different times, yet agree so perfectly in all essential points.

QUESTIONS.

22. Could you doubt that he whose birth was announced by angels from heaven would, at the age of twelve years, be able to dispute with the learned doctors and astonish them by his wisdom?

23. What would you expect to find in the history of the manhood of one whose childhood had been so wonderful?

24. State what the Evangelists say of the divine manifestations attending Jesus in his public ministry.

25. Was it strange that one who had been acknowledged as God's beloved Son should heal the sick and raise the dead?

26. What should you expect to find in the life of such a one?

27. What should you be prepared to find in his doctrine?

28. What is the record given us in the New Testament upon these points?

29. In view of such facts, what can you say of that record?

30. What picture does it present?

31. Of what did the four Evangelists write, concerning Jesus?

32. What if they had written falsely?

33. Were there those living at the time when the Gospels were written who would have proved them false if it had been possible?

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, give, each, his own account of the life and ministry of the Saviour,—each in his own words and style,—each in some way different from the others; yet all relate the same events, and record the same gospel.

Again, we see in the Gospels a simplicity and frankness which inspire confidence in them. The story told is natural and lifelike; it bears upon its face the evidence of honesty; it tells of the frailties, errors, and sins of friends as well as of foes.

Peter's inconstancy, the revenge that James and John would have taken upon the enemies of their Lord by calling down fire from heaven upon them, and the treachery of Judas, so faithfully set forth in connection with the immaculate life of Jesus, show well for the honesty of the historians, and win our faith to them.

But let us say, in conclusion, upon that part

QUESTIONS.

34. Were they proved false in any particular, so far as we can learn?

35. Should not this fact give us great confidence in their truthfulness?

36. What does the fact of four different histories, all agreeing in the same essential particulars, tend to show?

37. Have we such histories?

38. What can you say of the style of those histories?

39. What of the frankness and apparent honesty of the Evangelists?

40. Name some of the statements made by them, which show that they were honest.

of the New Testament called the Gospels, that the teachings therein set forth, as the words of Jesus, testify for the record that it is God's truth. Not one principle, direction, or command is set forth in the Gospels which will not make those who cherish, observe, or practise it both happier and better. Not one requirement is made that is not strictly just; not one law of human intercourse is suggested which all the wisdom of eighteen centuries has been able to improve. The teachings of Jesus Christ are so adapted to the wants of man in every age that they make him happiest who observes them most faithfully. They apply to all classes, and, when practised, exalt all classes. They promise that for which the universal soul is longing, and with them is presented such demonstration, in the works and life of Jesus, that we have no cause to doubt their truthfulness.

Never did man teach as the Evangelists tell

QUESTIONS.

41. If, then, they wrote of One who had been foretold, and represented him as he had been foreshadowed, and agreed in their record, and gave such evidence of honesty, and had ample opportunities to know whereof they wrote, and were not refuted in any of their statements by those who knew if their record was false, how should we receive the four Gospels?

42. Have we any other evidence of the truthfulness of the Gospels?

43. State the argument founded upon the purity and adaptation of Christ's words.

44 What do we say in view of the promises of Jesus?

us that Jesus taught; and we believe the record because the evidence of its truthfulness is in the words ascribed to Jesus. We judge of them as the historians did. We judge of them as the Jews did, and we say "never man spake" as did the Christ. We are conscious of an adaptation of his teachings to our condition and aspirations, and when we read that he promised eternal life in the present world, and immortal life in the future world, through faith in him, and can feel, in the experiences of every day, the truth of the first promise, and can see, in his miracles, his death, resurrection, and ascension, good cause to believe the other assurance, we trust in the record and say it is of God, for God only could have provided such a gospel for us. It presents the highest motives for the noblest acts of life, and represents the teacher of all righteousness as a pure and sinless being.

QUESTIONS.

45. Do we not need the assurance of his death, resurrection, and ascension, to make our faith in immortality complete?

46. Can we not know that what Jesus is represented as having said, in regard to the eternal life of those who believe in him, is true? Do we not enjoy such life in this world through faith in him?

47. If, now, you can think of any reasons for doubting the four Gospels which are sufficient to shake the faith of one who believes them for the causes herein named, will you set them forth, and we will consider them.

LESSON VIII.

THE WORD OF GOD.—THE NEW TESTAMENT CONTINUED.

THE four Gospels teach us that Jesus came into the world to proclaim a new doctrine, to put an end to the Jewish dispensation, to save man from sin and sorrow, and to reveal the great truths of one God and Father of all, of one brotherhood and one destiny in the spirit-land.

When he died, arose again, and ascended into heaven, the work he came to do was not completed. It is reasonable to suppose that he left it in other hands with directions as to its prosecution. In the New Testament Scriptures we find a statement to the effect that he did appoint his disciples to carry forward that enterprise; and therefore that statement is just such as we are prepared to find and believe. It is consistent. The men appointed were such as could do the work better than any others then living, for they had enjoyed

QUESTIONS.

1. What do the Evangelists set forth as the object of Christ's mission in the world?
2. Did he in his personal ministry accomplish the whole of that work?
3. Is it reasonable to suppose that under such circumstances he would appoint others to carry it forward after he should have departed from the earth?

those opportunities which fitted them to be the preachers and defenders of the new doctrine. When, therefore, we read that Jesus said to his disciples "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," we are prepared to believe the record as every way probable. Again, we would suppose that if the disciples went forth in the name of Jesus to convert men to a belief in the gospel, they would have been endowed with power to do those wonderful works which should confirm them in the eyes of the world as his apostles. If men, in those days, demanded of Jesus some wonderful work as an evidence of his Messiahship, much more would they demand of men, so much inferior to Jesus as the apostles were, similar evidences of their authority to teach in the name of Jesus.

QUESTIONS.

4. What do we read in the Gospels in regard to that matter?

5. If he was required to appoint others in the ministry he had established, whom would he be most likely to select?

6. Do we learn from the Bible history that he made choice of such men?

7. Is there, then, any reason for doubting it?

8. If the disciples went forth to teach in the name of Christ, did they not need some test by which they could satisfy the people that Jesus sent them?

9. Could they have shown a more satisfactory commission than a power to work such miracles as Jesus wrought would have been?

10. If the people demanded wonderful works as a proof of Christ's Messiahship, what would they have demanded of the apostles before they believed on their words?

The book entitled the Acts of the Apostles is, therefore, consistent with this idea, inasmuch as we read therein of miracles, which the apostles wrought, and by which thousands were convinced that God was with them. That history assures us that they healed the sick and raised the dead even as did their Master; and we are bound to say that the record is consistent, inasmuch as the necessities of their position would require of them the very things which are recorded of them. Again, we can see that, without great purity of life, the apostles could not have succeeded in winning converts to their faith. The life of their Master was spotless and perfect. They bade the people believe in him and imitate his example; therefore they must have lived in harmony with their teachings, or their lives would have opposed the success of their own work. It would have been vain for them to have denounced unrighteousness in any of

QUESTIONS.

11. Does the history of the ministry of the apostles harmonize with this apparent necessity?

12. State, so far as you can, the wonderful works which the apostles wrought.

13. Does the record of such miracles make the Bible history doubtful, or does it help to confirm its truth?

14. What did the necessities of the position which the apostles occupied seem to require?

15. What else was requisite to secure for them the confidence of the people?

16. Why was it necessary that they should be men of pure lives?

its forms, while they were doing acts of injustice and disregarding the law of right; and if, as wicked men, they had said to their fellows, Ye must imitate the Master and be pure as he was pure, they would have been driven from the temple and the synagogues, and branded as hypocrites. Purity of life was, therefore, a necessity of their position, and must have preceded success.

All the history that has come down to us, touching the lives of the apostles, teaches that they were sincere, upright, and holy men. The Bible gives us such an idea of them, and other history, written by the friends and by the foes of Christianity, confirms its truth.

Again, we would suppose that the disciples of such a master as Jesus was would be constantly referring to him in their ministry. That, in consideration of his death and resurrection, they would make that subject a prom-

QUESTIONS.

17. If they had been dishonest and unprincipled, what would the people have thought of them?

18. Is the history of them, which we find in the Bible, consistent with itself in this respect?

19. Should you not say that just such results would be sure to follow from such lives as they are said to have lived, such doctrines as they taught, and such wonders as they wrought?

20. What, then, do you say of the consistency of the record?

21. Have we any other evidences which help to prove that the apostles were such men as the Scriptures represent them to have been?

inent theme in their teachings. So reasonable is this supposition that if, in their writings, they had not made frequent mention of him, we should suspect them of unfaithfulness, or doubt if we had before us the genuine epistles. Now when we find in all the epistles frequent mention of Jesus, and read those words wherein one of them says, "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," we feel that the record is true because it is consistent with all the circumstances therein set forth, and therefore in harmony with itself. But the best evidence of the truth of the epistles is found in the doctrines therein set forth, and in the fact that all of them teach the same doctrines. The epistles were written by different men, in different countries and different times, as we might prove by evidence the most conclusive; and the fact that they agreed so perfectly in the great principles

QUESTIONS.

22. To whom should we naturally suppose that the disciples of such a teacher as Jesus was would constantly refer?
23. What should we suppose they would do in consideration of his death and resurrection?
24. What do we learn from the Acts and the epistles in regard to this matter?
25. If, in their epistles, no mention had been made of Jesus, what should we suspect?
26. What can you say of the doctrines taught in the epistles?
27. When and where were the epistles written?

therein set forth, and so completely with what Jesus had taught in his gospel that we cannot doubt that their authors were, according to their profession, the apostles of the Lord our Christ.

We find, by a careful examination of the epistles, that they exhibit the characteristics which are ascribed to their reputed authors in other parts of the Bible.

The fervid zeal, the strong passion, the great boldness, and the ruling spirit of Peter, the gentleness and sweet love of John, and the meekness and humility of James, are unmistakably shown in the writings which are called their epistles; and finally so perfectly adapted are their several systems of faith and practice to the wants of the soul, and to the development of a true and noble life, that we find our own minds and hearts adopting them as the truth of God.

QUESTIONS.

28. Do they agree in doctrine, or do they contradict each other?
29. What does this fact tend to show?
30. Do we find in the epistles any other evidence of their genuineness and authenticity?
31. By what are the writings attributed to Peter characterized?
32. What can you say of the epistles of John?
33. In view of all these things, what do you believe in regard to the New Testament Scriptures?

NOTE. Many other evidences of the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures exist, and might be named; but, if the teacher will enlarge upon the suggestions here

made, — asking many questions not herein set down, and carrying out the topics here named more fully than we can do in the space allowed in this book, — the mind will find enough upon which to rest, and the evidence will be sufficiently complete for nearly every mind.

Let me say again, as in previous numbers of this series of books, that the teacher should go beyond the text, and follow out suggestions to their legitimate conclusions in every direction.

LESSON IX.

GOD, THE UNIVERSAL FATHER.—SCRIPTURE ARGUMENT.

In Lesson IV. of this book we considered some of the evidences presented in nature and in our experiences, tending to prove the great doctrine of God's paternity. We did not exhaust the subject, even in that direction; although the evidences then considered made the conclusion to which we arrived quite certain.

We had not, at that stage of our inquiry, given any attention to the subject of Scripture revelations, and therefore did not present any Scripture testimony in that argument; but having, in our intervening lessons, found good and sufficient reasons for believing in the holy Scriptures and taking them as our authority in religious doctrine, we will

consider in this lesson the testimony of the Bible upon this important subject.

We will go farther in this lesson than we did in Lesson IV., and seek for evidence to prove that God is the Universal Father. We will not search for this evidence in the Old Testament, for Jesus Christ was a teacher of the doctrine of God's paternity, on whose words we may rely with perfect confidence. We turn, first, to his great Sermon on the Mount, and in that we find him using these words: —

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 44, 45.)

QUESTIONS.

1. What was the subject of Lesson IV?
2. Upon what evidences did we rely to prove that God is our Father?
3. How far did we go in that lesson, and to what conclusion did we come?
4. Why did we then confine our argument to facts in nature and experience?
5. Can we now refer to another source of testimony?
6. What is that source?
7. Why can we refer to the Scriptures now with greater propriety than we then could?
8. Having this source from which to draw our evidence, can we go farther than we did in Lesson IV?
9. What will we now seek to prove?
10. To what portion of the Bible will we confine our search?
11. Upon whose words may we rely with perfect confidence?
12. Why may we rely on his words?
13. In what portion of the Gospels do we find anything said of God as the Universal Father?

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (v. 48.)

"Pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (vi. 6.)

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. (vi. 8.)

"After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven," etc. (vi. 9.)

In this sermon Jesus spake of God as the Father of man fifteen times; and we should mark this fact with much attention: viz., that he spake of God as the Father of man, as such. Not of the Jews only, not of the Gentiles only, not of his followers only, but of man.

Now, in claiming that Jesus taught this great truth, we differ widely from some other Christian sects, and we need to understand the subject as clearly as possible. Those sects believe that Jesus was saying all these things to his disciples, who were very good men and who, because they were good, could claim God as their Father. We believe that Jesus said these things not only to his disciples, but to the multitudes who were gathered

QUESTIONS.

14. Name some of the passages to which you refer.
15. Do Universalists differ from some other sects in their views of the paternity of God?
16. How do they differ?
17. Did Jesus limit his teachings of the great Fatherhood of God to any class?

to hear him on that occasion, and who "were astonished at his doctrine." (Matt. vii. 28.)

Let us examine this point with some care. Jesus said to those who were there assembled, "After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven." Now if we ask who were to pray in that way, calling God their Father, the answer is not to be mistaken. They were sinners. Do you ask how that appears? I answer in the fact that they were to pray for forgiveness. (Matt. vi. 12.) Again, they were those who were not then within the gospel kingdom, and had not in their possession the treasures of righteousness, for Jesus commanded them to seek for that kingdom and for that righteousness. (Matt. vi. 33.) It is, therefore, clear that Jesus bade those call God Father, and that he spake of God as the Father of those, who needed forgiveness for their sins and who were unrighteous. But this is only one point

QUESTIONS.

18. To whom did Jesus preach his Sermon on the Mount?
19. How do we know that others were present besides his disciples?
20. How did Jesus bid those pray who were then listening to him?
21. Were they not sinners who were to call God Father?
22. How does that appear?
23. Were they as righteous as it was needful for them to be?
24. How is that shown?
25. Did Jesus then limit the divine paternity to those who were very good and perfect, as children?

in such an argument. That whole sermon bears witness of itself that it was delivered to men who were greatly in need of gospel instruction; and the way in which God is set forth as a Father shows clearly that the representation is of him as Universal Father,—as that Father who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust."—as that Father whom they did not then resemble, but might resemble by seeking to be kind and loving to all as he was kind, even to the "unthankful and the evil."

But we have other, and if possible, still more positive words of Jesus on which to rely. He speaks to men whom he designates as evil men, yet calls God their Father. These are his words:—

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." (Matt. vii. 11.)

QUESTIONS.

26. What does the general tenor of the sermon on the Mount show, touching this subject?
27. How many times in that sermon did Jesus speak of God as the Father of man?
28. What passage shows in a most forcible manner the universality of the paternity of God?
29. Does Jesus anywhere expressly designate men as being evil, and then speak of God as their Father?
30. Repeat his words.

To Mary he said, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." (John xx. 17.)

But we may say that in the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus has set forth the doctrine of God's universal paternity as clearly as we could desire to find it in any of his teachings. That parable is a beautiful representation of the feeling which God the Father cherishes toward the wayward and sinful who stand to him in the relation of children, however far from him they wander. They may be very sinful prodigals; but they are, nevertheless, prodigal sons. He sees them when they are afar off; he loves them still as only a Father loves; he puts in operation a chain of causes which shall awaken them to a sense of their condition, and when finally they turn their faces towards him, they find him looking towards them, coming to meet them, and ready to forgive. Showing thus, in all his manifestations, that he has never for a moment ceased to be a Father to them. In this

QUESTIONS.

31. What did Jesus say to Mary of God as a Father?
32. To what parable can you refer for further instruction upon this doctrine?
33. Who is represented by the father of the prodigal?
34. Who by the prodigal son?
35. Did the father of the prodigal cease to be his father because he wandered far away?
36. Did he love him even in his estranged and degraded condition?

sweet parable we cannot fail to see that Jesus represented God by the Father of the prodigal and all sinners by the prodigal; and if so, then is the conclusion inevitable that God is the Father of all. (See Luke xv. 11-24.)

We may refer to one more saying of Jesus, in confirmation of this doctrine, which is found in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. He there spake to a great multitude and to his disciples, saying, "Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven." All these sayings and many more which might be named are a foundation for St. Paul's words, found in Eph. iv. 6, wherein he says, "There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Thus you will see that the Scriptures teach us plainly and positively that God is the Father of all men. He loves all as a father

QUESTIONS.

37. What does this show of the relation of God to impenitent men?

38. To what other saying of Jesus may we refer touching this matter?

39. What did St. Paul say in regard to it?

40. Name any other passages that bear upon this great subject.

41. What, now, are your opinions since nature, experience, and the Holy Bible have given in a portion of their testimony?

42. Are these different witnesses harmonious in their teachings?

loves his children; reproves them and, when necessary, scourges them for their highest good; calls them back from their wanderings; meets them in mercy; shows by his love that he has never ceased to be a Father to them; puts upon them the signets of his approval, and rejoices that they are his obedient and loving sons once more.

Blessed be God, our Lord and Father, for evermore. Amen.

QUESTIONS.

43. Can you have any doubt that God is the Father of all men?
44. What doctrine, very dear to Universalists, rests in this conclusion?
45. If God is the Father of all, is not the human family one brotherhood?

LESSON X.

GOD'S LAW A BLESSING.

Having shown in the foregoing lessons a reason for our faith in God, — in him as our Father, and in the Bible as his holy word, — we deem the great principles of our doctrine so well established that we may now begin to reason from them to other conclusions.

QUESTIONS.

1. In what do the great principles of our doctrine rest?

If there is a God of infinite wisdom and power, if that God stands to us in the relation of a father to his children, and if he has revealed his law and his will to us in the holy Scriptures, it would seem that the way is prepared before us to a knowledge of the truth, in all matters wherein we should be blessed by knowing it. In this lesson we will consider, very briefly, some of the requisitions which God has made upon us, and our duty in relation thereto. In Lesson V., of this book, we touched upon this subject; and now in considering what the requirements of God are, we come very naturally to the first of the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Nothing could be more reasonable than this command.

When the Psalmist David said, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee," he gave expression to that conviction which is a natural outgrowth of the true idea of God. As Creator and Father, he is the

QUESTIONS.

2. If God is our Father, and has revealed his will to us in the Scriptures, for what may we reasonably hope?
3. If God is our Father, in what will his requirements rest?
4. What is the first of the Ten Commandments?
5. Is that commandment reasonable?
6. Explain wherein it is reasonable?
7. What did the Psalmist say of God, which seems to have been the result of much knowledge concerning him?

great Head to which we must all look, and the great Source of all good. We owe our life to him, we owe to him the preservation of our lives, and he is the giver of all our bounties. As St. Paul said to the Athenians, "In him we live and move and have our being." (Acts xvii. 28.)

He is all-sufficient and we need no other God. The command is, therefore, reasonable, and should be obeyed. It may, indeed, be said that we should obey God because he is God; but if he were a God of hatred and revenge, requiring us to obey a law that was painful and abhorrent to us, we should not cleave to his requirements with any strong attachment, and should be apt to say, Lo, the gods of the heathens may be more compassionate and we will cleave to them. But our God speaks to us as a Father, and therefore invites us to that which is in itself welcome, and which will bless us.

QUESTIONS.

8. Does man need any God save him who is the living and true God?

9. What does St. Paul say of his relation and sufficiency to us?

10. Is the first commandment reasonable?

11. If we study to know of God, will it be natural for us to obey that requirement?

12. If God were full of hatred toward us, and if by learning of him we should find that he was revengeful and unkind, should we love to worship him?

13. Should we be satisfied to accept him as our only God?

He says, "Thou shalt have no other God before me;" and when we see him in all the excellence of his paternity, we want no other God, and obedience is a privilege and a joy.

And now if we pass on to the consideration of the other eleven commandments, we shall find they are, each and all, invitations to purity, righteousness, and peace.

(Take up the commandments in this place, and see how obedience to them is a blessing to yourselves.)

We find this great and important truth in every requisition God has made upon us. We are to love him; and that we may do this, he requires us to learn of him. As we learn of him, we find that he is all-lovely, and thus obedience becomes natural and, as it

QUESTIONS.

14. In learning of God, do we make any such discoveries?

15. What do we discover in all his revealments to us?

16. When God said to man, "Ye shall have no other gods before me," did he deny them any privilege which it would bless them to enjoy?

17. How is it with the other eleven commandments? Do they restrict the privileges and the happiness of man?

18. How is man blessed by keeping the Sabbath holy?

19. How is he made happier by honoring his father and mother?

20. Would he be blessed by having any of the restrictions removed which any of the commandments impose?

21. Are we required to love God?

22. Should we be happier if that requirement had not been made?

23. Is it a difficult thing to love God?

were, a necessity of our natures. We, therefore, see in obedience to God no painful and irksome task, laid upon us by an unmerciful tyrant, but rather an excellent and blessed privilege for which we should offer constant praises.

This is an important item in the faith of every Universalist. We love to obey God because it is the best thing that we can do. We say, with the Psalmist, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." (Psalms xix. 7, 8.)

This is a necessity growing out of the fact that he is our Father. Standing in that relation to us, he seeks to do us good. His laws rest in love for us and we love and honor him "because he first loved us." (1 John iv. 19.)

Another great commandment of God ap-

QUESTIONS.

24. Who love him best?
25. Then, if learning of him helps us to love him, are we not brought to obey one requirement by giving heed to another?
26. Could we love God if he were in his nature and manifestations, unlovely?
27. What, then, can you say in regard to the joy which obedience is calculated to confer?
28. Do we, as Universalists, believe that God blesses us by requiring obedience of us?
29. What does the Psalmist say of the law of God?
30. Why should we love God?
31. Why should we obey him?

pearing in several of the Ten Commandments, and repeated in more positive language by the Saviour, is that we should love each other; and when we understand what is in man, we shall obey this requirement just as naturally as the other. We will, in this place, only refer to the fact that we are all brethren, which is of itself enough to inspire our love for each other, and will base our argument upon the fact that there is something in every man worthy to be loved and therefore capable of inspiring our love when once it is discovered. God loves all men,—the evil as well as the good; and if any one is worthy of God's love, he is surely worthy of ours. By the exercise of love to others we gain their love, and, as social beings, that is absolutely necessary to our happiness. When, therefore, we seek to obey God by loving each other, we seek for the excellences which others possess,

QUESTIONS.

32. Are we required to love each other?
33. Are we made happy by obeying this command?
34. Is there something in every individual worthy of our love?
35. How do we know this?
36. What will our love to others secure to us?
37. Then wherefore should we obey the commands of God? State the reasons as fully as you can.
38. Which will secure most prompt and effectual obedience, love of God, or a slavish fear of him?
39. Does not our doctrine, as Universalists, rest much upon this truth?

and every new discovery makes society seem more delightful, and life more replete with joy.

QUESTION.

40. In view of these considerations, what can you say of the restraint which God's law imposes? Is it a blessing, or would we be happier if free from all its requirements?

LESSON XI.

DISOBEDIENCE.—ITS CAUSES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

If man is made happy by obeying God's law, why should he not seek happiness in constant obedience? This is an important question which we need to consider with much care; for, at first thought, there seems to be no cause for the waywardness and sinfulness of man, if his own highest good invites him in another direction. Yet the fact that all are sinners who arrive at the years of understanding, makes it quite certain that some power-

QUESTIONS.

1. What important question is suggested in the introduction of this lesson?
2. If man is made happy by obeying God's law, does it not seem unreasonable that he should disobey?

ful motive invites to paths of disobedience; and what can that motive be?

There are sects of Christians who have said that man is a sinner, from a cause resting in his depraved nature, — a sinner per force of a natural hatred of all good. Such sects believe in total depravity; they say that because of the first sin committed by Adam and Eve, all men and women are born into the world with natures averse to all good, and inclined to all evil. But we need not pause to enter upon an argument against that doctrine; for it has been abandoned as false by more than half the so-called Evangelical sects in Christendom. And the fact that Jesus took little children in his arms and blessed them, saying, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," is of itself a sufficient proof that children are not totally depraved. But, if they are not, why do they commit sin, when to do so is op-

QUESTIONS.

3. What fact makes it probable that the sinner is influenced by some strong motive?
4. What cause has been assigned, by certain Christian sects, to account for moral transgressions?
5. To what source do they trace such depravity?
6. Why do we not need to seek for the cause of sinfulness in such a theory?
7. What other and better reason have we for rejecting such a doctrine?
8. If we are all by nature totally depraved, and if, since Adam's transgression, all have been under the same curse, then how could Jesus have said that infant children were fit representatives of the kingdom of heaven?

posed to their highest good and happiness? Will not the fact that they are imperfect account for such an inconsistency of action?

Let us consider. We desire the possession of some earthly treasure; we think that if we had it, as our own, we should be happier than we can be without it. There is, in such a conviction, a strong power inducing us to seek for such treasure. We may know that to seek it by fraud, dishonesty, or crime would be a great wickedness, yet the desire to gain it may grow to such proportions as to hide in part the evil that would result from an attempt to gain it wrongfully. As the motive appears great, the nature of the means by which to gain the thing desired is not so much considered, and we are thus induced to act, being deceived by false promises.

Let us take the case of the young man who is fond of amusements, but has not the means

QUESTIONS.

9. If that doctrine is not true, in what cause do we find a reason for our sinfulness?
10. Why do we seek for any earthly pleasure?
11. If we did not think it would make us happier, should we seek for it?
12. What is the effect of thinking much upon any object of our desire?
13. As we desire it more and more, do we not think less of the nature of the means by which it is to be obtained?
14. Do we then sin with a full conviction of the wrong before the mind?
15. Is the sinner deceived by the tempter?
16. Would he be if he were not imperfect?

wherewith to secure the pleasure which they afford to him. He longs for those amusements, and the desire, if continually cherished, grows to such proportions as to absorb his whole thought. How to gain them becomes his chief desire; and when he is tempted to take a few shillings from the funds of his employer, he does not weigh the evil of such an act against the good which he hopes to gain, but is so pushed forward by the temptation that he does not see the enormity of the crime he commits until the act has been accomplished. He is deceived by the promised good which a wrong act is intended to secure. Take any case within your memory, and if you had seen the nature of the wrong act, as clearly before you did it as afterwards, would you have sinned? Certainly you would not. In proportion to the magnitude of the promised good, the greatness of the evil was diminished. It is so, in a degree, with all cases of moral transgression. Usually, if not inva-

QUESTIONS.

17. How can you illustrate this?
18. Does not the young man who uses the money of his employer to secure therewith an opportunity for amusement, know that he sins by such an act?
19. Why, then, does he take the money wrongfully?
20. Is he not, then, deceived?
21. Did you ever do a wicked act, with the full knowledge and realization of the crime before you?
22. What is it that hides from the sinner the nature and consequences of his act?

riably, if the decision is made when the temptation is first presented, the evil will appear so great as to forbid the wrong act; but if we dwell upon the thought of obtaining the promised good, and do not say at once the act suggested is wrong in the sight of God, and not to be thought of as a means unto any end, however desirable, that promised good will grow, in our estimation, until it hides the evil, and there is nothing to keep us back from the transgression of God's law.

(Take different temptations and sins, and by them illustrate this point.)

Now, if man was perfect, he would always weigh the promised good against the means proposed whereby to attain it. He would never be deceived by false promises, and would never lose sight of the consequences of sinning. Jesus was tempted; promises of earthly good were made to him, on condition that he would transgress the law of his moral nature; but he, being perfect, resisted and triumphed. We, in our imperfection,

QUESTIONS.

23. If the decision is made when the temptation is first presented, what is the usual result?
24. If we dwell long upon the thought of obtaining the promised good, what is the usual result?
25. Can you give me some other illustrations of this truth? How is it with the intemperate man?
26. What would man do when tempted if he were perfect?
27. What evidence have we of this?
28. What did Jesus do when he was tempted?

may not always triumph; but the longer we pause to parley with temptation, the more sure of success will the tempter be.

We say, therefore, that the cause of our inconsistent acts, in sinning when we know that sin will make us miserable, lies in the fact that we are imperfect, and not in the alleged fact that we are, by nature, totally depraved. The remedy, which can only be suggested in this lesson, lies in the cultivation of our moral powers, and not in feeding impure desires; in keeping our thoughts upon the requirements of God, and not in dwelling much upon the promised good which the tempter may seek to keep before our eyes. There is much Scripture bearing upon this subject, and at your leisure you will do well to seek for an accumulation of evidence on so important a doctrine.

St. James says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh to you." (James iv. 7, 8.)

QUESTIONS.

29. At what moment may we most easily overcome the tempter?

30. In what, then, does the cause of inconsistent acts of transgression rest?

31. In what does the remedy lie?

32. If we seek, at once, to banish evil thoughts and keep before the mind our duty to God, what will the result be?

33. What evidence have we of this?

34. Please to quote as much Scripture on the point as you may be able to remember.

This direction implies a power to resist and an ability to draw nigh, which, if man were totally depraved, he could not possess; and the promise that the tempter will flee before a proper resistance, and that God will draw nigh, as we seek after him, is in perfect harmony with the ideas set forth in this lesson. If we turn away from the temptation, refusing to make it a subject of thought and desire, — if we turn to God, by keeping his law before our eyes, and dwelling in thought on his requirements, we shall not sin. The temptation will grow weaker as our power to resist becomes strong, through Him who will help us.

But if we are overcome, — if, in our imperfection, we fail to maintain our integrity, what will follow? In one word, what will be the consequences of sin? Let us look to the word of God for our answer. In that word we read that "the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked

QUESTIONS.

35. If we were by nature totally depraved, could we resist the tempter?
36. Could we cherish pure thoughts and so draw nigh to God?
37. What do these facts show?
38. If we do not resist temptation, — if we transgress the law of God, what consequences will be inevitable?
39. May not the sinner escape punishment in some way?
40. When may the sorrow and suffering resulting from sin be anticipated?

and the sinner." (Prov. xi. 31.) "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." (Prov. xi. 21.) "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Gal. vi. 8.) "The wages of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23.) "There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." (Isaiah lvii. 21.) "But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." (Isaiah lvii. 20.)

We see from these passages of Scripture, that trouble, sorrow, and misery are the consequences of sin. The sinner cannot escape from them. They follow as necessary results, and they follow speedily. They are experienced in this life and world, and he who would escape the suffering which they impose must cease to sin.

A question will now arise, which is of great importance, and the consideration of which will demand our candid and critical attention. It is this: Are the consequences of sin a blessing or a curse to those who suffer them? We must reserve this question for our next lesson.

QUESTIONS.

41. What Scriptures can you mention confirming this doctrine?
42. May not the sinner escape punishment until a future life?
43. What important question do these facts suggest?
44. Where will it be considered?

LESSON XII.

PUNISHMENT—ITS NATURE AND OBJECT. GOD IS LOVE.

In that lesson wherein we treated of God as a Father, certain evidences of his impartial and universal love were considered. We did not touch the Scripture argument upon that point, and only a few of the evidences from nature and experience were presented. Before we go farther, with the great subject of punishment, it is important that the fact of God's love should be so clearly seen that no doubt of its fulness and perfection shall remain in any mind. Let us, therefore, go back to Lesson IV., and review the subject as therein presented, and then we will add to those evidences such others as may seem necessary to a perfect demonstration.

REVIEW OF LESSON IV.

These facts, wherein we see that God has so made us that nature ministers to our love of the beautiful, to our love of melody and

QUESTIONS.

1. In that lesson wherein we treated of God as a Father what evidences were considered?
2. What argument did we not touch in that lesson?
3. Before we go further in determining the nature and object of punishment, what is necessary?
4. What shall we do well to do at this time?

harmony, to our tastes, and to our daily need of care and protection, food and raiment, and ministers in such a way as to promote our happiness, through the process by which we receive as well as in the fact of possession, are worthy of consideration, and should excite in us the highest degree of admiration and confidence.

But let us look upon other evidences of God's impartial love. The sun shines as brightly upon the fields and gardens of the poor man as upon those of the rich; upon growing corn and ripening fruit of the wickedly ungrateful man as constantly as upon the crops of him who every day prays with sincerity, forgetting not to give thanks unto the Source of all his blessings. The rains and dews are given with impartial favor; the air is as pure when it touches the cheek of the sinner as when it kisses the brow of the devoted saint. Summer and winter, day and night,

QUESTIONS.

5. Going back to said lesson, what evidences of God's love do you find in the manifestations of beauty by which we are surrounded?

6. Name the different illustrations, under this head, which are referred to in that lesson.

7. What evidences do we find in the laws of sound?

8. Illustrate this as in the fourth lesson.

9. What can be said of the care God exercises over us?

10. How does it compare with an earthly father's care of his child?

11. Does our obedience or disobedience increase or diminish that care?

seedtime and harvest, come to all alike; and these, as the mercies named in Lesson IV., are continued day after day, year after year, and generation after generation.

Another evidence of God's love is found in the provisions made for our race before the first man was created. He foresaw a time when the forests would be cut away, and fuel would disappear from the surface of the earth. That time has already come in certain portions of the earth. If we were entirely dependent upon wood for fuel, what would the people of large cities do, even now,—much more in a century from this time. But a supply of fuel comes from another source, and we have no fear that we shall ever suffer as otherwise we should most inevitably have done. God stored for us an inexhaustible supply in the coal-beds of the earth, and it came to light just at a time when it was needed. The pro-

QUESTIONS.

12. What more can you say of the evidences of God's love, set forth in that lesson?
13. How should the consideration of these evidences affect us?
14. What evidence of God's impartial love is found in the sunshine?
15. What in the rains and dews?
16. What is the testimony which the seasons give in regard to the universality of his love?
17. Have we any evidence tending to show that God loved man before he appeared upon the earth?
18. Where are they found, and what are they?
19. Repeat the argument based upon the fact that beds of coal are found in the earth.

cess by which it was created and secured to man, the welcome and perfect answer which it gives to a great necessity, proves conclusively that when the earth was in the process of its formation, God was thinking of man in great and impartial love. Observe, again, the provision of gas in coal, for the purpose of light; the provision of oil in coal, for light and for mechanical purposes; and finally, of the great oil wells, whose supplies seem inexhaustible. No other creature but man needs this fuel, light, and oil; no other creature could have discovered or appropriated them, and we therefore know that when God created them he was moved by a great love for the human family, not then in existence. That love was not limited to those who should prove themselves worthy to receive its bounties, but must have comprehended all, of every class and state, who share, or who may share, its blessings. We might go on to present many more evidences of God's love for universal

QUESTIONS.

20. Does this argument rest upon the fact that man needs this coal for fuel, and that only?
21. What can you say of the nature of coal as a gas-producing material?
22. What of coal-oil, and wells of oil?
23. How do you know that God created these materials for man?
24. Did he create them for any particular class of men?
25. By what must he have been influenced while creating them?

man, such as appear in the different departments of nature, from the simplest flower that smiles in our pathway to the grand cosmos of celestial spheres.

> "The sea, the earth, the skies are full of thee,
> Benignant, loving, glorious Lord of all."

But the greatest of all the exhibitions of God's love is yet to be named; and we find the evidence of that in Holy Scriptures.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." (Eph. ii. 4, 5.)

"Love your enemies and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of

QUESTIONS.

26. Could we find in nature many other evidences of God's love for man?
27. Can you name any instance where his love is limited to a class, or in any way partially distributed?
28. How wide is the range in which we may seek for evidences of this kind in nature?
29. What does the poet say upon this point?
30. Do we find our greatest and best evidences of this truth in nature?
31. Where are they found?
32. What did Jesus say upon this subject?
33. What did St. Paul say?
34. What did the apostle John say?

the Highest; for he is kind to the unthankful and the evil." (Luke vi. 35.)

"He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. v. 45.)

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature (thing) shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

In these passages of Scripture, as in many others, for which you should seek, the exceeding love of God is set before us, from which no event in life or death can separate us. What Jesus said of the display of love in the sunshine and the rain, confirms the evidence derived from the same source as we observe it; and the fact that he loved us before we loved him, that he loves the unthankful and the evil, and that the impartial and undying love of Jesus was only a display of his love,

QUESTIONS.

35. Did Jesus confirm any of the evidences drawn from nature, and named in Lesson IV?
36. Whose love was displayed in the love of Jesus?
37. Did he love his friends only?
38. Did he love the righteous only?
39. What did he say of God's regard for the unthankful and evil?

should convince us that the apostle spake truly, when he said, "God is Love."

From these facts let us reason. First, we must see that if "God is Love," then the law which he has given for man to consider and obey, must have been framed and given in love. Nothing can be more certain than such conclusion, if such a premise is true. But if God's law is given in love, then it is intended as a blessing to man; for love could not devise a curse which should, by any possibility, overtake its object.

Secondly, a law is powerless without a penalty attached thereto; but as the law and the penalty are from the same source, one cannot be intended as a blessing, while the other is to result in endless evil to man. Sweet and bitter waters flow not from the same fountain. God labors toward one end by all the agencies which he puts forth, and if the law was framed in love to bless mankind, the penalty must have been affixed in the same spirit for the same purpose. Those penalties are the consequences of disobedience, — are the punishments inflicted on the sinner; therefore

QUESTIONS.

40. In view of these things, what do you believe in regard to God's love?

41. If God's love is impartial and infinite even as he is infinite, what must have been the object of his law?

42. If he intended his law as a blessing, could he have intended the penalty of his law as a curse?

such punishments must be intended as blessings.

In the next lesson, we will continue the consideration of this important theme.

QUESTIONS.

43. Could the law look to one end and the penalty to another?
44. What are the penalties of God's moral law?
45. What, then, must be their nature and object?
46. Does this argument complete the subject and make all parts thereof clear and satisfactory?

LESSON XIII.

PUNISHMENT — ITS NATURE AND OBJECT. GOD IS LOVE.

If God is Love, and if he made his law in love, then the penalties attached to that law must contemplate the good of those who may suffer them. To this conclusion we arrived in our last lesson. There are, however, other facts which may help to confirm us in this opinion, and some of them we may state as follows.

QUESTIONS.

1. To what important conclusion did we come in our last lesson?
2. Are there other facts leading to the same conclusion, which we have not considered?

God had an end in view in giving us a law to observe. He said to man, — to all men, — "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Now it will not be doubted that all men would be better and happier by observing that requirement; but all do not observe it, and the penalty attaches. Now the object of the penalty is to cause man to repent and obey God, or it is only for the purpose of giving him pain; no other cause can be named which is even plausible. And as we see at once that a God of love could not inflict pain upon one of his children, having in view no end of love, it is positively certain that punishment for sin is inflicted to make the sinner turn from his evil way. Again, and in this light a penalty is a part of the law, its object is to secure obedience to the law, and thus it is a blessing. So much for the rea-

QUESTIONS.

3. Is it certain that God had an end in view in giving man a law?
4. Name some law of God by which to illustrate this.
5. Would the observance of that command make man better and happier?
6. Does the penalty attach if man does not obey?
7. State the two objects, one of which God must have intended to accomplish by the penalty.
8. But could a God of love inflict punishment for the sole purpose of making the sinner miserable?
9. What, then, must the object of the penalty be?
10. In what other way do we arrive at the same conclusion?
11. If the penalty is a part of the law, must it not look to the same end as the law itself?

sonableness of this idea, and we will now see how it harmonizes with the word of God. The Psalmist David says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." (Psalms cxix. 67.)

Again, he says, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, — yea, than much fine gold; sweeter, also, than honey and the honeycomb." The judgments here spoken of must be considered as penalties for sin; for, in the context, the Psalmist is speaking of the "Law of the Lord," the "statutes of the Lord," and the "commandments of the Lord;" and if such judgments were more to be desired than gold, then they were calculated to bless the one who experienced them.

Again, we have the testimony of St. Paul upon this matter as follows: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

QUESTIONS.

12. And if the law is intended to bless those to whom it is given, what is the conclusion?
13. The doctrine that punishment is a blessing is, therefore, clearly reasonable. What do the Scriptures declare in regard to it?
14. Repeat what David has testified.
15. What is here meant by "judgments of the Lord"?
16. How is this shown?
17. What says St. Paul touching this matter?

"Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they, verily, for a few days, chastened us after their pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his righteousness. Now no chastening, for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby." (Heb. xii. 7–12.)

Here the point is made entirely clear, and the chastening, which is, beyond all doubt, a penalty for transgression, is "for our profit," and yields the "fruits of righteousness." In this passage, reference is made to the chastening of earthly fathers, and we know the purpose for which they inflict penalties upon disobedient children; and when we are told that we should much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live, we know

QUESTIONS.

18. What does he mean by chastening?

19. If the Lord chastens us for our profit, then certainly for our good; and can that which is to bring us good be a curse?

20. In the passage quoted from Paul, reference is made to the punishment inflicted by earthly fathers on their children. In the comparison instituted, how does God's object appear?

21. Is there any earthly father who would inflict on his son endless punishment?

that his punishments must be intended as blessings.

The wise man gives his testimony directly to the point. He says, "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." The words "correcteth," "chasteneth," and "punisheth," are used to convey the same idea, and they certainly stand to represent a blessing from God to man. But how is punishment a blessing to the sinner? Let us take the parable of the prodigal son, and by it illustrate this subject so clearly that the true answer to this question shall appear therein.

The young man left his father's house and journeyed into a strange land. This is a type of him who leaves the home of his youthful purity and goes into the land of disobedience and sin. His wanderings brought him into trouble; he hungered for the bread of life; he was covered with the rags of sin, and became

QUESTIONS.

22. What, then, in the light of Paul's words, can you say of God's intent to punish his children?
23. How does the saying of Solomon correspond with that of Paul?
24. What can you say of the words chasteneth, correcteth, scourgeth, punisheth, etc.?
25. What do they stand to represent?
26. By what may this subject be illustrated?
27. Please to give the illustration.
28. Of what was the prodigal, in his destitution and misery, a type?

very wretched; his hunger awakened him to a sense of his condition; his rags and nakedness made him feel his shame, and these reflections made him think of his father's house, his forsaken virtue and joys, and caused him to return to his home a penitent and better man.

His losses and sufferings were his punishment; and if they had not been experienced, he would not have seen the error of his ways, and would not have been startled to a sense of his condition. In his absence from home, in his degraded state, nothing could have blessed him so much as the punishment which he suffered. It did not seem joyous; he, doubtless, felt as the first murderer did under the sentence which was passed upon him, — that his punishment was greater than he could bear; nevertheless, it worked out for him "the peaceable fruits of righteousness." So must it be with every punishment that God inflicts. Begotten in love, all penalties must bear the fruits of love. In other words, they are reformatory. This conclusion, which

QUESTIONS.

29. What effect did his hunger, rags, and nakedness, have upon him?

30. If he had not been rendered wretched and miserable by his wanderings, would he have resolved to return?

31. Did not his punishments startle him to a sense of his condition, and help to save him?

32. Is it probable that his punishment seemed joyous to him?

33. What did Cain think of his punishment?

34. Could it have blessed him if it had not been severe?

is reached in the light of so many truths, forbids that punishment for sin can be endless. If good is to result from it, there will be a time when the good will be realized; when the prodigal will return and receive the forgiveness of the Father, and be robed in the garments of purity and righteousness once more. This doctrine agrees with all we know of human experience, with the general tenor of Scripture teaching, and with the fact that "God is Love," and "will not cast off forever." (Lam. iii. 31.)

We might arrive at the same conclusion, saying that as God is good unto all in this life, and as he is unchangeable, he will be good to all forever and ever; and as an endless punishment would be an endless curse to those who should suffer it, a good being could never cause it to be inflicted. But we have reasons enough already for saying that punishment

QUESTIONS.

35. State the difference between a severe punishment and a cruel or unjust one.
36. Of whom is the prodigal spoken of by the Saviour a type?
37. If all are to be affected by punishment as the prodigal was, can there be any one who will suffer endlessly?
38. Does it not seem that all will return home at last?
39. Does this doctrine agree with all we know of the dictates of human reason?
40. With what does it agree which is a still better authority?
41. From what other established truth might we reason to the same conclusion?

is a blessing to the punished, and for the present we will rest the subject here, repeating only the words which the Lord himself has spoken: —

"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.) God will not clear the guilty, because he loves them; he will chasten, redeem, and purify them, and then they will be saved.

QUESTIONS.

42. If these things are so, can the doctrine of endless punishment be true?
43. What important words are a fit conclusion of this lesson?
44. By whom were they spoken?
45. Why will not God clear the guilty?
46. If he does not clear them, what will become of them?

LESSON XIV.

REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS.

HAVING seen, in our last lessons, what is the nature and object of punishment for sin, we

QUESTIONS.

1. What was the subject of our previous lesson?

will now consider a subject so closely connected with that of punishment that we may find it difficult to draw the line which separates one from the other; yet the two subjects are distinct, as we shall see.

Repentance is the consequence where punishment may have been the cause; but it may begin before punishment has completed its work, so that there may be two moral processes going forward in the mind and heart of the sinner at the same time. Yet those processes are distinct from each other and the line between cause and effect never ceases to exist. For example: the prodigal son lost his sources of innocent happiness, one by one, until he was reduced to a state of the most abject poverty and pitiable wretchedness. As, one by one, his treasures of innocence departed, his sorrows and sense of guilt increased; and from them his repentance was inevitable. His first pang of guilt, felt and acknowledged as such by his own heart, must have induced some feeling of repentance, very imperfect and almost unworthy to be called such, though it might have been yet the be-

QUESTIONS.

2. What subject is closely connected with that of punishment?
3. Are the two subjects distinct from each other?
4. May the processes of punishment and repentance be going on in the heart of the sinner at the same time?
5. How can you illustrate this?

ginning of a greater and perfect work. The farther he wandered, the more wretched he became; the more clearly that his guilt appeared, the deeper was the work of repentance in his heart, until he cried out in his great misery, saying, "I will arise and go to my Father." Then repentance was so complete as to assert its power over his actions and bring him back to his former state of innocence.

Observe here the distinction to be made between punishment and repentance. Punishment did not bring the prodigal back to his father's house; it awakened in him a consciousness of his wickedness; that induced repentance for his sins, and repentance prepared him to go home. But we need to have a better definition of repentance than this explanation gives; and let us seek for it by saying, first, that repentance is not a sorrow for the wretchedness we suffer in consequence of sin. Second, it is not a fear of punishment. Third, it is not a regret that we have been

QUESTIONS.

6. Is repentance an instantaneous or a progressive work?
7. In the case of the prodigal was it punishment that brought the wanderer back to his forsaken home?
8. State the effect of punishment, and the effect of repentance upon him.
9. Do we get, from this illustration, an idea of repentance which is sufficiently clear?
10. State as clearly as you can, in what repentance does not consist.

detected in evil. Fourth, it is not a formula of words by which we beg to be pardoned of our offences.

Many mistake the truth in regard to this matter, and we need to have clear ideas of this very important subject. Suppose that any one of you should commit some sin which should make you very wretched; would you repent of that sin by simply feeling sorry that it had involved you in so much misery? Not at all; for in such a feeling there might not be one particle of hatred for the sin itself, or godly sorrow for the act of sin. You might in such a case love the wrong you had sought, and cherish no regret, except that having reference to the law which thrust its penalty upon you.

If sorrow, as the result of sin, goes no deeper than that, there may be, in the mind of the sinner, a feeling of absolute hostility toward God, by whose law he suffers for his sin.

QUESTIONS.

11. Is there much error in the minds of men upon this subject?

12. What do we all need to have, touching this matter?

13. Do you repent of sin by feeling sorry that it has made you miserable?

14. Might you not feel such a sorrow, yet incline toward the evil you had committed?

15. Would there necessarily be any hatred of sin, or reverence for God's law in such a sorrow?

16. Might any one be sorry, in that sense, yet cherish hostility to God's law in his heart?

Again; Suppose you have committed some sin, and a threatened exposure makes you fear some terrible punishment. Or, suppose you are told that endless flames threaten you in consequence thereof. As you stand aghast, and tremble before the penalty, are you necessarily repentant? Not at all. In such a case, if the fear of punishment could be removed, the sinner might instantly repeat his offences, thereby showing that he had not repented.

Take now the case of one who feels that he has been detected in some great crime — no matter whether by his fellow-men, or by his God. Let the consciousness of detection, which arraigns him before some tribunal of justice, be upon him, and is he repentant because he is in terror before such tribunal? Not at all. That terror may bring him to repentance, yet it may be upon him while yet he loves the evil and would cling to it, if he could with safety. And so it is with him who uses many words to represent his penitence. They

QUESTIONS.

17. Suppose you stand in fear of punishment for some sin you have committed; is that necessarily, a state of repentance for that sin?

18. What might you do, if that fear were removed?

19. Does fear of punishment show any sorrow for the act of sin, or any respect for God's law?

20. Does terror, in view of threatened punishment, have any good agency in bringing the sinner to repentance?

21. What else is necessary?

22. Does repentance consist in any words by which sorrow is expressed and pardon craved?

must be words of the heart, to be effectual; and they must represent a reverence for the law-giver and a sense of the justice by which his law is administered, before they will reveal a sincere and effectual repentance.

With this explanation, showing with sufficient clearness what repentance is not, the true idea must not be difficult to obtain; and we will state it as follows. Repentance is that deep consciousness of the wrong which sin does to the sinner, of the great offence which it is in the sight of a just and merciful God, which will lead to its abandonment.

He who has been a sinner and comes to see that his sin is in its very nature a curse to him, and an offence to his merciful Father in heaven, will be in a truly repentant state. He will be sorry that he has committed sin, because sin will appear hateful in his sight and because he will feel that a just law forbids the sinful act.

St. Paul says that sorrow for sin is not

QUESTIONS.

23. To be effectual what must be the source of such words?
24. What must they represent?
25. Having thus considered the negative of this subject, will you now give a positive idea of repentance?
26. What sinner will be in a truly repentant state?
27. Why will such a one be sorry that he has committed sin?
28. Is sorrow for sin enough to secure genuine and effectual repentance?
29. What does Paul say upon this subject?

enough to insure repentance, and therefore much less can it be repentance itself. He said to the Corinthians, "I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." (2 Cor. vii. 8–11.)

Godly sorrow for sin is that sorrow which has in it a sense of God's justice in forbidding us to sin, — a sense also of his goodness which makes obedience to his law our highest privilege. Such sorrow purifies the heart and brings salvation to the sinner. Salvation, not from a just punishment for sin, for repentance does not save from the result of an act of sin already committed, but from sin itself, from future acts of sin.

St. Peter therefore says, "Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins many be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts iii. 19.) It is only when repentance is such as to lead to reformation that salvation follows: and only then is it effectual.

QUESTIONS.

30. Give a definition of godly sorrow for sin?
31. To what does such sorrow bring the sinner?
32. Does it bring him to salvation from the effects of sin?
33. What can save us from the effects of sin?
34. How can we be saved from sin itself?
35. What does Peter exhort upon the subject of repentance?
36. When does salvation result from repentance?

If, therefore, my young friends, you feel that in any peculiar sense you are sinners, think, first of all, that the law, by disobeying which you are made sinners, is the law of a just and loving God, — a law made in your behalf to keep you from the worst evil that could befall you, — indulgence in those vices and passions which will surely make you miserable.

Think, then, how low, sensual, degrading, and corrupting, those things are which you are forbidden to do and then a godly sorrow for all past offences will possess your soul and lead you to repentance. Such repentance will place you in a state of salvation from sin. Such a state will insure forgiveness. The subject of forgiveness must be reserved for our next lesson.

QUESTIONS.

37. In view of these facts, what should the one who feels himself a sinner consider first of all?
38. What should be a second reflection?
39. Will these secure sincere repentance?
40. In what state will such repentance place you?
41. What will that state secure?

LESSON XV.

FORGIVENESS.—GOD IS LOVE.

MUCH has been said and written on the subject of forgiveness, yet very many Christians have only an imperfect idea of its nature, or of the work which is accomplished by its exercise. If the preceding lessons on punishment and repentance are well understood by the members of this class, you may all be able to understand and appreciate the philosophy of forgiveness; but those who adopt a different theory on those subjects aforesaid cannot reach in their way the true idea to which we will now direct our attention; for we may say that the philosophy of punishment, repentance, and forgiveness must rest on one basis, and that is the great truth that "God is Love." He punishes in love; by his love the sinner is brought to repentance; and in love he forgives.

But what is forgiveness? Is it an act of

QUESTIONS.

1. Have all Christians a clear idea of the nature and object of forgiveness?
2. Have you, in your minds, a satisfactory philosophy upon this subject?
3. On what basis must such a philosophy rest?
4. Must punishment, repentance, and forgiveness rest on the same basis?
5. How does that appear?

God toward the sinner, by which he is saved from the just punishment of his offences? That doctrine would be at war with all we have said and proved in regard to the nature and object of punishment. If God punishes in love, and has for his object the reformation of the offender, then it would not be an act of love for him to remit such a punishment, and by remitting it, he would withhold an agency designed to accomplish a great good. Again, we cannot doubt that God has affixed to the transgression of his law a just penalty; and if so, then to remit the penalty, or any part of the penalty, would be to hesitate in the execution of his justice. Once more we must say that to save the sinner from the penalty of his law, after transgression, would be an act directly opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures upon that subject, as we have already seen in Lesson XI. of this book,

QUESTIONS.

6. Is forgiveness, in any sense, a remission of punishment for an offence committed?
7. Why can it not be?
8. If God punishes in love, could he remit in love a just punishment?
9. What would he withhold by so doing?
10. If God is just, must not all the penalties of his law be just?
11. If he should remit such a penalty, would he be just?
12. Would such an act be in accordance with the teachings of Scripture?

—God "will by no means clear the guilty." (Ex. xxxiv. 7.) "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." (Prov. xi. 21.)

We must, therefore, see that, as repentance is no security against a just punishment for a sin already committed, even so forgiveness cannot be a remission of any penalty already incurred.

We shall see the truth of this statement, first, in the fact of God's purpose in affixing a penalty to his law, and his justice in administering justice, as already suggested; and secondly, in those passages of Scripture which relate to this subject. In all those places in the Bible where forgiveness is represented, we find the reference to be forgiveness of sin, not of the punishment of sin. Let us give our attention to a few passages touching this point. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (1 John i. 9.) "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." (Psalms xxxii. 1.) "I write to

QUESTIONS.

13. Quote some passages touching this point.
14. What must we see, in the light of these facts?
15. Do the Scriptures teach that it is not the penalty for sin which is forgiven?
16. Can you show from the Scriptures what it is that God forgives?
17. Quote as many passages upon this topic as you can recollect.

you because your sins are forgiven." (1 John ii. 12.) "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts v. 31.) "In whom we have forgiveness of sins." (Eph. i. 7.)

One more passage claims our attention in a particular manner, inasmuch as it conveys the same idea as do the foregoing Scripture quotations, and at the same time shows most positively that, though the sin is forgiven, the sinner is punished. "Comfort ye my people; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received at the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isa. xl. 1, 2.)

The same is clearly shown, in the passage already quoted in part, wherein the Lord proclaims himself, saying, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and who will in no wise clear the guilty." (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.)

QUESTIONS.

18. What passage conveys a still more perfect idea of the object of forgiveness?

19. Is it then true that the sinner may be both punished and forgiven?

20. What other important passage is worthy of consideration in our present investigation?

I think you will have seen that these passages abundantly sustain our proposition, and now we will seek to learn what forgiveness is, and what it does for the moral transgressor.

If, as we have seen, the sinner may be both punished and forgiven, it is quite evident that forgiveness succeeds the punishment, — for there could be no object in punishment after forgiveness had been received, — and this shows that our first suggestion was well founded, wherein we said that punishment and repentance prepared the way for forgiveness.

Now as punishment is intended to reform the sinner, and as repentance shows him in a state of reformation, we might conclude that those conditions were essential to forgiveness, therefore that forgiveness is for those alone who are reformed; who have seen the evil of their ways, the justice of God's requirements, which they have disregarded, and repented of their transgressions.

Let us, then, define forgiveness as the putting away of those offences which have been repented of. God forgives by ceasing to re-

QUESTIONS.

21. In what order or relation to the sinner do punishment, repentance, and forgiveness stand?
22. What, then, is the office of punishment and repentance as they relate to forgiveness?
23. Is that office essential in securing or preparing the way for forgiveness?
24. To whom, then, is forgiveness extended?
25. Will you now tell what forgiveness is?

member against the sinner those offences from which he has turned away in full consciousness of their wickedness.

God's forgiveness reinstates the penitent returned prodigal to his former position of confidence and favor. He having seen the wickedness of his former acts, by being made to suffer a just punishment therefor, and having come in penitence to ask forgiveness, the Father sees that his heart is once more attached to the good and the pure, and he trusts him, as he did before his days of wandering, and his past sin is so passed over, or forgotten, that it does not bear against him. The ring of confidence and approval is put upon his finger, and the robe of forgiveness is given him.

The Psalmist had this idea of forgiveness when he prayed, saying, "According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. . . . Hide thy face from my sins and blot out all mine iniquities." (Ps. li. 1–9.) St. Paul, quoting from the Prophet, sets forth the same doctrine; and the passage has all the more force as it comes to us

QUESTIONS.

26. What is the effect of forgiveness upon the forgiven?
27. How do you explain this by a reference to the prodigal son?
28. How does it appear that the Psalmist had this idea of forgiveness?

in the name of the Lord. "For I will be merciful to their righteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. (Heb. viii. 12.) (See also context.)

The prophet Ezekiel expresses the same idea when he says of the repentant sinner. "All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him." (Ezek. xviii. 22.) This verse, with those connected with it, represents our idea of forgiveness so perfectly that we will refer to them as a sufficient authority and explanation on this point. (See verses 21, 22, 23, and 24.)

You may herein see that our doctrines of punishment, repentance, and forgiveness are closely allied to each other, and you will not fail to observe that, to the sinner, repentance must precede and prepare the way for forgiveness. In the light of these truths you will see the full force of the Saviour's language when he said, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. vi. 14, 15.)

QUESTIONS.

29. What does Paul say in regard to it.
30. What words can you quote from the prophet Ezekiel?
31. Who is it that forgives the sinner?
32. Does God feel the same toward the sinner before as after forgiveness?
33. Does the sinner feel the same toward God before as after forgiveness?

Hatred, revenge, or an unwillingness to forgive a penitent offender is wrong in the sight of God, and he who cherishes it toward a brother man is not in a state where forgiveness can be exercised toward him. As we seek to cherish a right spirit toward others, so shall we be right in the sight of God, and if we have cherished hatred, we must learn to love before our hatred will be put aside, passed over, or forgotten against us. This doctrine will raise a question in some minds which we cannot pause to answer in this lesson, but which shall receive our attention in another part of this book.

QUESTIONS.

34. What is produced thereby between the two?
35. Can you be forgiven of God while you hate or refuse to forgive your brother man?
36. Do you understand the words of Jesus touching this point?
37. Explain the subject of forgiveness as fully as possible?
38. If the sinner does not repent of his sins in this life, can he ever be forgiven?

LESSON XVI.

MAN—HIS NATURE AND CAPABILTIIES.

DOUBTLESS, you are all aware that certain Christian sects have professed to believe in the total depravity of human nature. They have taught that man inherits that depravity, and is, from the moment he enters into the world until he experiences a supernatural change, — which they call "conversion," or "the new birth," — wholly impure, — averse to all good and inclined to all evil; that he is, of himself, incapable of thinking a good thought, or of doing a good act.

You, doubtless, know that this very singular doctrine rests upon the supposition that Adam's first transgression entailed a curse upon all his posterity, bringing them into the world with the great sin-blight on their souls. Now we, as Universalists, discard that doctrine as utterly false. It is at war with the

QUESTIONS.

1. What doctrine, in regard to the nature of man, has been popular in the Christian church for many centuries?
2. How, in the opinion of those who believe that doctrine, did this sad state befall us?
3. State the idea as fully as you can.
4. Upon what alleged fact does this doctrine rest?
5. Do we, as Universalists, believe it?
6. With what is such a doctrine at war?

facts of every-day life; with the facts of our individual experiences; with all the teachings of this book, sustained thus far by so many evidences; and most important of all, it contradicts both the spirit and letter of the Holy Scriptures.

In our last preceding lessons, we have seen that God has given man a law, to which he requires obedience. We have also seen that punishment is sure to follow the transgression of that law. That law demands good thoughts and good actions of all those upon whom its requirements are placed. It demands love to God and love to man. It demands reverence, worship, faith, and obedience toward God, and sympathy, compassion, honesty, and justice toward man.

These demands come from a just God; but we can see no justice in making a law for those who have no moral inclinations or abil-

QUESTIONS.

7. Is it to be reconciled with what you have learned in this book, thus far?
8. What else does it contradict?
9. In our last preceding lessons, what have we learned?
10. What does the law, given to man by God, demand of him?
11. State the requirements of that law as fully as you can.
12. Is God just in making such demands and requiring such service?
13. Would he be just in giving a law to beings who had no ability to obey?

ity to obey the law. We can see no justice in requiring man to do that which he is morally incapable of doing. We can see no justice in punishing the sinner for acting in exact harmony with the nature and desires that were born with him, and from which he has no power to release himself; and therefore we do not believe that a just God deals with man in that way, or places him in any such position of impossibilities.

If the child is totally depraved, so that he cannot think a good thought, or do a good act, until his nature is changed, is it his fault if he commits crime, and goes in an evil way? Is he to be punished for having a nature which he had no voice in choosing, — a nature forced upon him by a destiny over which he had no control? And is he in fault for doing that which that nature compels him to do?

Then, again, how is he to get a better nat-

QUESTIONS.

14. Would he be just in requiring love of those whose natures were all hatred, and purity of those who were all impure?

15. Would he be just in punishing the sinner for doing that which, by nature, he was compelled to do?

16. What, then, is the conclusion to which such facts and considerations force you?

17. If the child is totally depraved, is it his fault that he does evil?

18. Does the child have any agency in getting the nature with which he is born?

19. If he is born totally depraved, is it his fault?

ure? He cannot desire it if he cannot cherish a good desire. He cannot pray for it, or labor for it, if he is incapable of thinking a good thought, or doing a good act; and how is his nature to be changed unless the change is forced upon him against his sinful and depraved wishes?

You cannot fail to see, by looking in this single direction, that if a child should be born into the world totally depraved, he could never become a moral being, capable of good or evil, by any agency or power of his own; and if not, then God would be unjust to require good thoughts or deeds of him, and still more unjust to punish him for doing that which he could not avoid. But we deny that the child is born a totally depraved being, since facts deny that such a doctrine is true. Does not the child quickly manifest a love for its mother? But could a being in whom there is no good cherish so pure and divine a sentiment, passion, or impulse? Does not the child quickly learn to love its mother's

QUESTIONS.

20. If he cannot think a good thought or do a good act, how is he to get a better nature?

21. If, by nature, he hates purity and goodness, will he desire a better nature?

22. If his nature is changed, how must it be done?

23. Could such a child put forth any effort to make of himself a moral being, capable of good as well as evil?

24. You have said that facts deny that man is by nature totally depraved; what are they?

sweet smile and to sympathize with the mother's tears? Does not the very little child catch the joy of its surroundings and feel happier when its parents, brothers, and sisters are happy? We all know that it is so, and we know that if the infant mind, heart, and soul were all evil, it would not be so.

Every sweet smile upon the features of childhood, every word of innocent and joyous prattle from the lips of infancy, every manifestation of love, sympathy, thankfulness, confidence, or benevolence with which childhood abounds, is a denial of the doctrine of total depravity; and we can but be astonished that learned and pious men should ever have believed and taught it. We might drop the subject here and say, with all propriety, man is not, by nature, totally depraved. But we shall do well to give more thought to the subject, by way of considering the teachings of God's word in relation thereto.

And do we read in the Scriptures that all

QUESTIONS.

25. If the infant heart and soul were all evil, could it thus love, sympathize, and rejoice in the happiness of others?

26. What, then, is every infant smile, and all the manifestations of its sweet love?

27. In view of such facts, what might we now do and say?

28. Is there another source of instruction to which it will be well to look before leaving this subject?

29. What is it?

are born with the blight of Adam's sin upon them? My young friends, the Bible teaches no such doctrine. You may find such an idea in Milton's "Paradise Lost," and in sermons and books written by men of different religious sects; but the Bible denies that it is true, as we shall now see.

The prophet Ezekiel says, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." (Ezek. xviii. 20.)

St. Paul says, "For when the Gentiles who have not the law do, by nature, the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts; their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the meanwhile, accusing, or else excusing, one another." (Rom. ii. 14, 15.)

Jesus, the perfect Teacher, said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children,

QUESTIONS.

30. Do we read in the Scriptures that all are born with the blight of sin upon them, — a blight caused by Adam's transgression?

31. Where do we find this doctrine?

32. What does the prophet Ezekiel say in regard to the imputation of sin?

33. What does St. Paul say touching the matter of total native depravity?

34. What is the testimony of Jesus in regard to the nature of little children?

ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God." (Matt. xviii. 3.) Again, he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Mark x. 14.)

These passages should be sufficient to settle this matter beyond all controversy,—beyond all doubt. If "the son shall not bear the iniquities of the father," then the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin is false. If the Gentiles "do by nature the things contained in the law" of God, then is it certain that by nature they are not totally depraved. If they "show the work of the law written in their hearts," then are their hearts, in a measure, undefiled and incorrupt.

If Jesus acted wisely and judged correctly, when he made little children symbols of the innocence and purity of the kingdom of heaven, then are they not vile, depraved, and abominable in the sight of God.

QUESTIONS.

35. Unto what should such testimony be deemed sufficient?

36. If the "son shall not bear the iniquities of the father," how do we inherit sin from Adam?

37. If the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law, what is the inevitable conclusion?

38. What conclusion do you draw from the other portion of the same passage?

39. And what do we learn from what Jesus says of children? State the argument fully.

From this representation of that in which we do not believe, you may form a tolerably accurate opinion of what our doctrine is upon this important subject. We may state our views in a few words: Man is a moral being. If this single declaration is well understood, our views are fully comprehended.

A moral being, justly held responsible to a moral law, must be capable of doing good; and if the law imposed upon him be not a useless thing, he must be liable to do evil.

This is the exact position in which we stand. Our inclinations and passions, all good in themselves, are to be kept in subjection to our moral sentiments, enlightened as they are by Christian instruction and the law of God. Our liabilities to do evil call into exercise our moral faculties, and that exercise gives the necessary opportunity for the growth and triumph of the good that is within us.

QUESTIONS.

40. From these representations of what we do not believe, in regard to the nature of man, can you form an idea of what we do believe?
41. State our belief, as taught in this lesson?
42. What is a moral being who is justly held responsible to a moral law?
43. How does it appear that man is such a being?
44. What is the nature of our inclinations and passions?
45. What power is given by which to direct them to good uses?
46. What do our liabilities to evil call into exercise?
47. What opportunity is thus afforded?

Moral indolence, unfaithfulness, and disobedience render us unhappy and bring us into a state of depravity and degradation. Moral activity, watchfulness, and obedience lift us up continually higher, in the perfections and joys of life, by making us the masters of ourselves.

QUESTION.

48. State fully and clearly the conclusions to which we come in this lesson?

LESSON XVII.

REGENERATION.—NEW BIRTH.—CONVERSION.—A NEW HEART.

These terms may have different shades of meaning, but they refer to the same change, and set before us, essentially, the same work. As Universalists, we believe in the importance of that change, and should ever labor and pray for the accomplishment of that work

QUESTIONS.

1. What can you say of the relative meaning of the phrases and words which stand at the beginning of this lesson?
2. Do Universalists ignore the change to which they refer?

in ourselves and in the world. As may be seen by the facts set forth in our last lesson, we do not believe that regeneration is a change from a state of total depravity to one of moral purity, or that the new birth is a radical transformation of the human nature first given us. We believe, as Solomon says, that "God hath made man upright;" but that "they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. vii. 29), and by their own works have made conversion and a new heart necessary. Let us devote this lesson to a correct understanding of this important subject.

The original meaning of the term "new birth," or "born again," must be sought for among Jewish sayings; for such expressions are purely Jewish. When, in the days of Christ, and for ages previous to that time, a heathen was converted to Judaism, that change was called a new birth; he was called a new-born child. The Jews said, He has been born again. Such a change was worthy to be

QUESTIONS.

3. What do we not believe in regard to them?
4. How do we agree with Solomon in regard to man's original state?
5. What, then, makes conversion and regeneration necessary?
6. Where must we seek for the original meaning of the terms to which I have referred?
7. What was a conversion from heathenism to Judaism called by the Jews?
8. What was the one thus converted called?

so characterized. From the darkness of heathenism into the light of Jewish law, prophecy, and worship was indeed a transfer to a new life. From a belief in heathen deities to a belief in the one living and true God was such a change as might well be called a new birth.

Then, again, the change in belief and in character, produced by such a conversion, would sanction such strong language as was then used to represent the change. If you will read Jewish history, with some attention to this matter, you will find that such phrases as are set at the beginning of this lesson were, to the Jews, as familiar as household words.

When, therefore, Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," that Jew knew perfectly well the meaning of the phrase setting forth the necessary change, and only failed to see how it was applicable to him. He knew

QUESTIONS.

9. Explain the change wrought by such conversion, and show how it was worthy to be called a new birth?
10. Did such a change affect the belief only?
11. What shall we find, if we read Jewish history, with reference to this matter?
12. To whom did Jesus speak in regard to the necessity of being born again?
13 Did Nicodemus understand the meaning of his words?
14. Did he understand the application of them to himself?

that it was necessary for a Gentile to be born again before he could be reckoned among the people of God, or stand in God's kingdom of Israel; but he did not see how a Jew needed such a change, before he could be a disciple of the Messias. He thought, as did all the Jews, that when Messias should come, he would consider the believers in Moses and the prophets as his peculiar favorites; and, beginning with them as his acknowledged people, build up and enlarge his kingdom from without; and when the Master told him that the conversion of the Gentiles to a belief in the Jewish law and Scriptures did not imply a greater change in profession and character than did the conversion of a Jew to the principles of his gospel, the ruler could not comprehend him. Then Jesus explained himself as follows: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.)

Even as the proselyte to Judaism must make his profession openly by baptism into the faith of Abraham and the prophets, even

QUESTIONS.

15. Why did he not?
16. What was his idea of the relation of the Jews to the promised Messias?
17. Did he think that the Christ would come to establish a new religion?
18. What explanation did Jesus give to help him in comprehending the subject?
19. What did he mean by being born of water?

so must the Jew who would become a disciple of Jesus be baptized into the new religion, and in that way be "born of water," and furthermore, must receive the Spirit of the new religion so fully as to have it control and radically change his whole character and life; and in that way be "born of the Spirit."

So much we need to know of the original meaning of the terms, or phrases, I have named; and that this exposition is correct we have a sufficient assurance in the final remark of Jesus to that Jewish ruler who did not seem to comprehend the Master, even after the explanation of which we have spoken. Jesus said to him, "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John iii. 12.) This shows most positively that, by the new birth, Jesus had not referred to anything pertaining to the heavenly state, and the use made in the Scriptures of the words "born again," "born of

QUESTIONS.

20. Did he, in this, have reference to any Jewish rite or requirement?

21. What did he mean by being born of the Spirit?

22. What assurance have we that this explanation is correct?

23. Does not this passage show that the new birth of which Jesus was speaking did not relate to the heavenly or spiritual life?

24. Does the use made of such expressions as born again, born of God, and born of the Spirit, correspond with this idea?

God," "born of the Spirit," etc., does everywhere correspond with this explanation.

Some few examples will satisfy you of the truth of this explanation or use of such words. In the first chapter of John's Gospel we have this passage: "But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 12, 13.) Born how, and into what life? Born by faith in him into the gospel life, or into his gospel kingdom. But this same apostle makes the matter still clearer in his first epistle. He says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (1 John v. 1.) St. James recognizes the fact that the new birth is of faith in Jesus, when he says, "Of his own will, begat he us with the word of truth" (James i. 18); and Paul says, "In Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel." (1 Cor. iv. 15.)

QUESTIONS.

25. What does John say in the first chapter of his Gospel touching the subject of a new birth?
26. What birth is here referred to, and how was it realized?
27. What still clearer statement does the same apostle make?
28. How does James recognize a birth through faith?
29. Quote the words of Paul upon the same subject.

Here we cannot fail to see that the new birth was to be through faith in Jesus; but it was not to be through a passive and powerless faith, but through such a faith as affects and controls the life, — such faith as makes of the believer a new creature in purpose and life. (See 2 Cor. v. 17.)

And now you may ask how the new birth is to be understood as something to be sought for by us. I answer the same, precisely, as it was defined eighteen hundred years ago. He that believes on Jesus Christ to-day, with his whole mind and heart, is born of God. If he has been an unbeliever, professedly or practically, and becomes a believer, that change is conversion. If he has manifested the fruits of unbelief in transgression and wickedness, and his new faith becomes active, purifying his heart and life, that change is regeneration. In both cases it is a new birth; but the terms conversion and regeneration are best applied and, as we use them, best understood in the

QUESTIONS.

30. Was a passive and powerless faith, a mere assent to certain truths, enough to create the believer anew?

31. What was necessary?

32. You have given the original meaning of these expressions. Tell me, now, what they mean as they apply to us.

33. Who is he who is born of God to-day?

34. Who is he that needs conversion now?

35. Who needs regeneration?

36. What can you say of the expressions conversion and regeneration, as they stand related to new birth?

cases supposed. And can we not enter the gospel kingdom without faith in Jesus as the Lord's Christ? Oh, how simple and easy to understand is the answer to this question! A little child could not mistake in regard to it. Cannot the wicked man inherit the joys of that kingdom without being regenerated, and, as it were, created anew in mind and spirit? The answer to this question is not more difficult than the other. We must all be born into a faith in Christ; we must all be willing to profess our faith in him; we must drink of his Spirit and imitate his life, or we cannot be his true and representative disciples in the earth. But you may ask, if this is so, how it is with infants and very little children who can have no faith in Jesus, knowing nothing of him?

I answer they are not his disciples in the earth in the sense represented by Jesus to Nicodemus. They are not members of his gospel kingdom established in this world and, as such, are not interested in the subject of conversion, new birth, or regeneration. As little children, and while they remain such,

QUESTIONS.

37. Can we not enter the kingdom of Christ or of God in the earth unless we believe in Jesus?

38. Cannot the wicked man inherit the joys of that kingdom without being regenerated?

39. Explain this as fully as you can.

40. How is it with infants and very little children who are not old enough to have faith in Jesus?

they are symbols of the purity and innocence of God's kingdom in the immortal life; and only as they grow to learn of Jesus will they need to be born into a gospel faith; only as they wander in unbelief will they need conversion; only as they become impure and sinful will they be interested in the subject of regeneration.

Much more might be said upon this subject, but we will close this lesson by remarking that the changes of which we have spoken are not instantaneous, or, of necessity, life-lasting. It may take years to convert or regenerate a man, and he may so fall back into unbelief and sin as to need the change many times in the course of his life. Only when we are in the faith, and that is active in us, are we in the kingdom of Christ or the kingdom of God in this world.

QUESTIONS.

41. When will they need a birth into Christian faith?
42. When will they need conversion?
43. When will they need regeneration?
44. What is the last important idea suggested in this lesson?

NOTE. Let the teacher enlarge upon this last idea and illustrate it in many ways, showing that the doctrine of sudden conversions is not truthful, or safe as a ground of trust in life.

LESSON XVIII.

JESUS THE CHRIST—HIS NATURE AND MISSION.

In this book we have had occasion to make frequent mention of Him who is called both Jesus and Christ in the Holy Scriptures. We have yet to treat of the subjects of atonement, salvation, the resurrection, etc.; in doing which, we shall bring the Christ still more prominently to view; and there can be no more appropriate place in the arrangement of this book for a presentation of our doctrine concerning him than in this chapter.

Jesus was the name given by the angel to him who was born as the Christ. He is therefore called Jesus as the son of Mary, and Christ as the promised Messiah. Sometimes in the Scriptures, and sometimes in sermons and essays, but improperly in all cases,

QUESTIONS.

1. Of whom have we had frequent occasion to speak in considering the lessons of this book?
2. Why is he called Jesus?
3. Why is he called the Christ?
4. Is it proper to speak of him as Jesus Christ, as if those were his two names?
5. What other subjects have we yet to consider in this book?
6. To whom shall we have to refer in connection with those doctrines?

he is called Jesus Christ. If the two names are used to designate him, they should be separated by the particle "the," and read, "Jesus the Christ."

Of the history of this Being we need not speak in this place. It is plainly written in the Gospels, and all we need to know of his birth into this world, of his childhood, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension, is therein set forth. Again, the fourth book of this series is devoted to a consideration of those topics embracing his miracles and his doctrine. What we need now to do, is to consider more specially and critically the questions, — Who was the Christ, and for what great purpose did he come into the world?

Let us first seek to learn who he was; and, treating the subject from a scriptural standpoint, we say that he was the Christ of prophecy; the seed promised to our first parents in the day of their banishment from the paradise of innocence, who was to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15); the seed

QUESTIONS.

7. What should we do before proceeding to a consideration of those themes?
8. Shall we need to go critically into the matter of his history?
9. In what book of this series is the life of Jesus made the chief subject of consideration?
10. What do we need to consider in this place?
11. From what stand-point shall we look for truth in relation to his nature and mission?
12. What are the first prophecies concerning him?

promised to Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. (Gen. xxii. 18; Gal. iii. 16.) He was the "Shepherd," the "Rock of Israel," and the "Shiloh" referred to by Jacob in his dying speech to his twelve sons (Gen. xlix. 10, 24); the "Prophet" promised by Moses (Deut. xviii. 15; Acts iii. 22); the "Redeemer," "Immanuel," "Prince of Peace," "Branch," "King," "Servant," "Witness," "Leader and Counsellor" foretold by Isaiah. (Isaiah vii. 14; ix. 6; xi. 1; xxxii. 1; xlii. 1; lv. 4; lix. 20.)

He was the One named by Jeremiah as "The Lord our righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 6); by Ezekiel as the good "Shepherd" (Ezek. xxxiv. 22); by Hosea as the "Olive-tree," and by Micah as the "Judge of the nations." (Hosea xiv. 6.) He was the One of whom the Lord, by the mouth of his prophet, said, "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles

QUESTIONS.

13. By what names was he called many hundred years before he was born?
14. What is the meaning of the word "Redeemer," as applied to him?
15. What is the meaning of "Immanuel"?
16. What is the meaning of "Shiloh"?
17. What did Jeremiah say of him?
18. What said Ezekiel, Hosea, and Micah of him?
19. What is said of his success?

shall wait for his law." (Isaiah xlii. 4.) "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." (Isaiah liii. 10, 11.) "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Isaiah xlix. 6.)

All these things, and many more recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures, were said of Christ, centuries before the time of his appearing, and they show us that he was the fulfilment of great and long-cherished expectations.

Of no other being who ever lived were there such prophecies. No such long-cherished and almost universal hopes were ever entertained of the character and mission of any other unborn child; and when we know that those prophecies were by the aid of divine inspiration, and those expectations sanctioned by the promise of Almighty God, we

QUESTIONS.

20. Whose pleasure is he to accomplish?
21. What is he to be unto the Gentiles?
22. How extensive is his salvation to be?
23. From these considerations can you form an opinion as to the character of Christ, and as to the One who sent him?
24. And what was to be his mission?
25. When he came, of what was he the fulfilment?
26. Were such prophecies ever made of any other being who ever lived upon the earth?
27. Were such hopes ever entertained of any other?
28. What do the facts that those prophecies were made by aid of divine inspiration, and those hopes sanctioned by the promise of God, tend to show in regard to Jesus?

can form a tolerably accurate idea of the superiority of the then unborn Messias.

Speaking now of him in the light of events connected with his advent, we say that he was the Being whose birth was heralded and announced by the angels of God (St. Luke i. 31; ii. 11); the One who was called by the angel "the Son of God" (Luke i. 35), the Son of the Highest" (i. 32), "Jesus," the Saviour of his people from sin (Matt. i. 21), "Emanuel," or "God with us." (i. 23.) He was the One at whose birth Israel's king was filled with alarm; at whose cradle the Magi worshipped; and for whose personal safety, celestial visitants made special revealments. (Matt. ii. 3–14.)

Again, we say he was the peerless and unexampled child, who at the age of twelve years recognized the divine mission which he

QUESTIONS.

29. What events connected with his birth show him to have been a superior being?

30. What titles were given him by those who spake as from heaven?

31. Who gave those titles?

32. Why should Israel's king have been troubled at his birth?

33. Who were the Magi, and what did their coming and worship show concerning Jesus?

34. Who, besides Joseph and Mary, took an interest in the child and watched over his safety?

35. What does the fact of so many angelic and heavenly manifestations show?

36. What event in his childhood gives us some light in regard to him?

came to perform; recognized the fact that the Almighty God was his Father, and by his matchless wisdom confounded the aged Rabbins of the Jewish temple. (Luke ii. 46–50.)

Finally, we say that he was the only being who ever lived upon the earth of whom the Almighty said with audible voice, "This is my beloved Son;" the only One upon whom the Spirit of the Lord ever descended in visible form; the only One whose voice the raging sea obeyed, upon whose transfiguration immortal spirits attended; who arose from the dead, in fulfilment of his own prophecy, and in the presence of many witnesses ascended into heaven. (Matt. iii. 17; Luke iii. 22; Luke viii. 24; Mark ix. 2–4; ix. 31; Matt. xxviii. 6, etc.; Acts i. 9; Luke xxiv. 51.) To say that such a being was no more than a man, would be to contradict the facts of his birth; to say that all the prophecies concerning him were extravagant and disproportionate to the mission of any human soul. It would be saying that God's acknowledgment of him upon the banks of Jor-

QUESTIONS.

37. What did he mean by saying that he must be about his Father's business?

38. What did God say of him at the time of his baptism?

39. But if he was a man, and no more, how was he in any peculiar sense the well-beloved Son of God?

40. Why should God have said this of him if he might with the same propriety have said it of others?

dan and the mount of transfiguration had in it no particular significance, and was rather intended to deceive the world than to lead it unto a true idea of the Saviour. It would be equivalent to saying that a mere man may calm the tempest, soothe to peace the wild waves of the raging sea, and after sleeping in the grave an appointed time, come forth according to his own prediction and ascend bodily into the skies. However like the bodies of mortal and imperfect men was the one in which Jesus appeared, lived, suffered, died, and ascended from the earth, we should disregard all the facts in the history of our humanity by saying that he was no more than a man. We must come to this conclusion in view of the facts presented in this lesson; but we have still higher and more demonstrative evidence to consider which will be given hereafter.

QUESTIONS.

41. And if Christ was no more than a man, could not those words have been spoken of others as well as of him? If not, why not?

42. What other events in the life of Jesus attest his superhuman nature?

43. Before we could say that he was a mere man, what should we have to do?

44. State the case fully and show what we have thus far seen to convince us that Jesus was something greater and more divine than man.

45. Shall we consider our evidence exhausted upon this subject?

LESSON XIX.

JESUS THE CHRIST—HIS NATURE AND MISSION.

WE cannot doubt that Jesus dwelt in the flesh. We cannot doubt that, in coming into this world to do the work appointed by the Father (John iii. 17, 18), he took upon himself our nature (Heb. ii. 14–16); that, being thus subjected to its influences, he might know its power and be able to present to us a visible and comprehensible life as our example. (Heb. ii. 17, 18.) But in considering the question as to his nature, we must remark that human nature is made up of something more than flesh and blood. Our humanity is not our body, and that alone. Human nature is the result of a combination,—the union here of body and spirit. But what body and what spirit? Clearly the human body and the human spirit. If God should

QUESTIONS.

1. What can we not doubt in regard to Jesus?
2. What Scripture proves that he took upon himself our nature?
3. For what purpose did he take upon himself our nature?
4. What is human nature?
5. Of what is it a union or combination?
6. What body and what spirit is combined?

dwell in a human body, animating, moving, and standing in relation to it as does the human spirit, that union would not be man. The being thus formed would be superhuman. So of the union of any perfect spirit with the mortal human body; it would not present a specimen of our humanity. Our spirits are imperfect; they lack wisdom; they lack power; they are liable to consent to sin; and such spirits in the human body constitute what we call humanity. Was Jesus like us in this respect? Was not the Spirit poured upon him without measure? Did he lack for wisdom or power? Was he liable to sin? Did temptation meet in him only the resistance of a human spirit? The fact that he did not sin is a sufficient reply. (Heb. iv. 15.)

One more consideration deserves attention, and, to a candid mind, must be conclusive upon the point now before us. Jesus came to "seek and to save that which was lost."

QUESTIONS.

7. If God should dwell in the human body, would that union be a human nature?
8. What would the union of any perfect spirit with a mortal body like ours result in?
9. Are our spirits perfect? If not, in what respects do they fail?
10. Was Jesus like man in his spirit?
11. Did his spirit lack wisdom or power, and did it ever consent to sin?
12. Whom did Jesus come to seek and save?

(Matt. xviii. 11.) "He tasted death for every man." (Heb. ii. 9.) All had gone astray; but the Father so loved the world that he gave his Son to save the world (Isaiah liii. 6–11); and all that the Father gave him shall come unto him, and no one will be cast out. (John vi. 37.) Now as Jesus tasted death for every man, if he was a mere man, does it not follow that he tasted death for himself with the others? If he gave his life for the world, which evidently means all mankind, and if he was of the common humanity, did he not give it for himself? If all were given him by the Father, and all are to come to him, and he is embraced in the humanity given, then was he not given to himself that he might come unto himself and save himself?

Such conclusions would surely follow from such premises; and as they are too absurd to

QUESTIONS.

13. For whom did he taste death?
14. If Jesus tasted death for every man, and if he was a mere man, what follows as a necessary conclusion?
15. If he gave his life for the world,—that is, for all men,—and if he made up a portion of the great humanity, did he not die for himself as well as for others?
16. If all were given him by the Father, that all might at last come to him, then, if he was a mere man, does it not follow that he was given among the others to himself that he might come to himself?
17. Are such conclusions reasonable?

be cherished for a moment, we say that the premises are faulty. Jesus the Saviour must have stood above the plane of those who were to be saved and lifted up by him, and therefore was not a mere man. Many other testimonies might be adduced, showing that Jesus stood above the rank of our humanity, and was too exalted to be called a man, in the sense applied to others of our race; but we will notice only one in this place: When Jesus asked his disciples who men said that he was, they answered, saying, "John the Baptist; but some say Elias, and others one of the prophets. And he said unto them, But who say ye that I am? Peter answered, and said unto him, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

We may well ask what was thus revealed. Was it that Jesus was a man like other men? Would the knowledge of such a fact have re-

QUESTIONS.

18. As they follow necessarily from the doctrine of Christ's humanity, what must we think of that doctrine?

19. Above what must Jesus have stood?

20. Are there other reasons for believing that Jesus stood above the plane of our humanity?

21. Name one incident in the life of Jesus which shows that he considered himself something more than man.

quired a special revelation? Certainly not. It seems that the public opinion gave him the credit of a vast superiority over the common level of humanity when it said he was one of the great prophets living in the earth again. But when Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," he had the Saviour's blessing, and the assurance that God had made the great truth known to him. A greater spirit than that of any of the prophets was in the body of Jesus, — the spirit of Him who had been previously in the bosom of the Father (John i. 18); who said nothing while here that he had not learned of the Father before he came (v. 19, 20); who had seen the Father as no man had ever seen him. (John vi. 45.) This was the Christ; and as to his nature, we may well say it was the Christ-nat-

QUESTIONS.

22. Would a knowledge of the fact that Jesus was a man have required a special revelation?

23. Consider those words of Jesus to Simon, and tell me what you think they show of Christ's opinion of himself.

24. Did not the words of Jesus show that a great truth, higher than that which most men cherished, had been revealed to Simon?

25. Did Jesus teach anything while on the earth that he had not learned of the Father?

26. Had he not seen the Father as no man had seen him?

27. Had he not been with the Father as no man had been with him?

28. What passages of Scripture prove this?

29. What nature did Christ possess as a union of body and spirit?

ure. Not man, not God; he stood between to be the Mediator, the Intercessor, the Redeemer, and Saviour.

In these last words his mission is suggested. But before we speak of that, we should see what evidence we have for saying that Jesus was not God. There are those who would exalt him to that position, in their creeds, and who say that he was in all things equal to and one with the Father.

Upon this point we need not spend much time; for, fortunately for those who seek the truth, Jesus has spoken very fully and distinctly upon this matter. He said on one occasion, "The Son can do nothing of himself." (John v. 20.) Again, he said, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of my Father who sent me." (John v. 30.) And still again, "I go unto my Father: for my Father is greater than I." (John xiv. 28.)

Let us now briefly consider the nature of Christ's mission. We have already had occa-

QUESTIONS.

30. Was he God?
31. Was he man?
32. When the Scriptures say that he took upon him the seed of Abraham, is anything more intended than the fact that he dwelt in the human body?
33. How is it shown that Jesus stood in a position between man and God?
34. What words of Christ show that he was not God?
35. What offices performed by him show that he stood in a position between God and man?

sion to say that he came to seek and save that which was lost. In some of the prophecies which have been quoted, that work was set forth. But from what was he to save? The angel who said that his name should be called Jesus gave the answer to this question, in part. He said, "he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. i. 21.) He came, therefore, to save from sin; to so enlighten the mind and heart, to so exalt and purify the life, to so inspire the soul with love and reverence for God, that men would cease to sin; and in just proportion to the prevalence of his gospel, and the acknowledgment of its principles in the world, has that salvation been achieved. The work is still going forward and the promise of triumph is the world's hope. Sin is still in the world. Hosts of men need salvation from its destroying power; and every day and every year Jesus is saving his people. He shall at last "finish sin and bring in everlasting righteousness." (Dan. ix. 24.) But there is another salvation which he came to accomplish or secure to man; and this, as many

QUESTIONS.

36. From what did he come to save?
37. How did he save from sin?
38. Is the work of salvation complete?
39. Have we a promise that it shall be complete?
40. What is said about the finishing of sin by the Saviour?
41. Is there another salvation we are to have through Jesus Christ?

Universalists believe, was his great and universal work. I refer to salvation from the power of death and the grave; salvation promised long before he came (Hosea xiii. 14); salvation of which we are assured in the words of Paul: "He shall reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. xv. 25, 28.) Salvation of which we are assured by the Saviour himself when he says, "I am the resurrection and the life." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John xi. 25; xii. 32.)

In our lesson on universal salvation, the subject of Christ's mission will be more fully considered, and we need pursue it no further in this place. He was a faithful servant to accomplish the will of his Father, which will was that all men should be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he has set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law." (1 Tim. ii. 4; Isaiah xlii. 4.)

QUESTIONS.

42. What is it from?
43. What Scripture will you quote in regard to it?
44. How many are to experience that salvation?
45. How is this shown?

LESSON XX.

THE ATONEMENT.

CONNECTED with the doctrine of original sin, to which we referred in Lesson XVI., is the doctrine, long cherished by a large portion of the Christian church, and still believed by many in partialist churches, called the Vicarious Atonement. It may be stated as follows: the world being dead in sin, because of Adam's transgression, and being fully incapable of releasing itself from that condition, indeed, fully disinclined to do so, it rested thus, as it were a plague-spot upon the works of the Creator. It became more and more hateful in his sight, and he was just ready to issue against it his fiat of eternal wrath, when Jesus, his beloved Son, co-equal and one with him, — a second person in the Godhead, came forward and offered himself as a sacrifice, in the place of man. He is represented, by that

QUESTIONS.

1. What doctrine of the church is intimately connected with that of original sin?
2. What is the doctrine of Vicarious Atonement?
3. How does that doctrine represent Jesus, so far as his love for man was concerned, and how does it represent God?
4. If Jesus was equal and one with God, how was it that he had to plead with God to accept him as a sacrifice in the place of man?

doctrine, as pleading with the Father until the divine consent is obtained, and the substitute accepted. Then he came, the embodiment of all innocence, to take upon himself a world's guilt, — the favorite of all heaven and the darling of the Father, to bear the reproach of all angels and the hatred of God which the world had merited; and when he had lived, suffered, and died, the divine vengeance was satisfied, and heaven made possible to man.

You can but be shocked at the idea of such a doctrine, and may fail to realize that intelligent men and women could have believed it, but when I tell you that the following quotation is from the works of FLAVEL, whose writings still find a prominent place in the literature of partialist sects, you will begin to realize that facts are sometimes stranger than

QUESTIONS.

5. If he was one with God, how could he have loved the world so much while the Father cherished toward it such terrible hatred?

6. If he was one of the three persons in the Godhead, and, as such, loved the world with an undying love, how could the Godhead have been willing to pronounce upon it an endless curse?

7. How could the suffering and death of Christ the God have satisfied the demands of the Father God?

8. Was it just for an innocent being to suffer in the place of the guilty?

9. How great are the sufferings of Jesus represented to have been, by the doctrine of Vicarious Atonement?

10. And by whom does it represent that he was delivered to such torture?

fiction. These are the words: "To wrath, to the wrath of an Infinite God without mixture, to the very torments of hell, was Christ delivered, and that by the hands of his own Father."

Universalists do not believe in this doctrine any more than they do in original, inherited depravity. They cannot suffer such blasphemy in their creed as such an imputation against God would be; and they would not so contradict the Bible and ignore good common sense, as to say that Justice would accept the suffering of the innocent, in the place of the guilty.

As we have seen, in previous lessons, the wicked suffer for all their wickedness. "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; —much more the wicked and the sinner." But if Christ suffered for us, and by that suffering took away our load of guilt, how is it that we suffer? Is sin twice punished? Once in the vicarious sacrifice, and once in the original transgressor? You see that

QUESTIONS.

11. Does is seem possible that men could have believed such a doctrine?
12. What do Universalists think of it?
13. What have we learned in previous lessons about the persons who suffer for sin?
14. But if Christ suffered for the sins of the world as a substitute for man, why should the sinner suffer?
15. If Christ bore our guilt, and suffered the full penalty therefor, and if the sinner suffers for all his offences, then is not sin twice punished?

common sense denies the justice of such an arrangement. Under the New, as under the Old Dispensation, every transgression receives its just reward, and the sacrifice made by the Saviour did not alter anything in this respect. (Heb. ii. 2.) By this passage, you will see that common sense is confirmed in its decisions, by that word which we call Holy.

Men suffer for their sins, as certainly as they did in the days of Abraham, David, and Isaiah; for Christ has not, by any act of his, taken away from the murderer the sense of guilt, the pain of remorse, and the terror of impending judgments.

Facts teach us every day that Christ did not suffer to save us from the consequences of sin, and the Bible confirms that truth most abundantly. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." (Gal. vi. 7.) "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things in body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) "So, then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." (Rom. xiv. 12.)

QUESTIONS.

16. What is a common-sense view of this matter?
17. What say the Scriptures upon it?
18. Has the death of Jesus taken away from the murderer a sense of his guilt or the pangs of his remorse?
19. What do the facts of every day teach us in regard to the consequence of sin?
20. What Scripture corresponds with such facts?

The doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement starts with another false idea as its basis. It is, that God was angry with man, and it was necessary to appease his wrath by some great sacrifice; that Jesus saw the only alternative, and, in his great mercy, offered himself to save the world from eternal condemnation. Now the apostle says, "We love him because he first loved us." "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." (1 John iv. 19; Eph. ii. 4, 5; 1 John iv. 9.) And Jesus himself said, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (St. John iii. 16.) This settles the question about God's anger as the cause of Christ's mission, and shows that it was not God who was opposed to man and needed the Atonement, but man who was estranged from God.

QUESTIONS.

21. With what other false idea does the doctrine of Vicarious Atonement start?
22. Did Jesus come into the world in consequence of the anger of God toward man?
23. Why did he come?
24. Can you show this by any Scripture testimony?
25. If God was not opposed to men, and did not need to be reconciled, why did Jesus come to earth?

This is the true idea. So many false ideas in regard to God had obtained in the world that men looked upon him in a false light, and did not love the one they saw. So many sinful enticings drew them from the paths of holiness, that they disregarded the laws of God, and were, in life, at war with his requirements. Man needed to be reconciled to God, not God to man. Man needed to see God in his true character, that he might turn to him and love him. He needed to see the beauty and learn of the joy of a pure life, that he might seek for the same treasure. Jesus came to accomplish those objects for the world, and so to make man one with God, or as men used to say at-one with God. The word atonement was originally written at-onement, and means a state of reconciliation. And now we listen to the Scriptures and see how beautifully they set forth this idea, and how simple the subject is when seen in the light of truth.

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," etc. (2 Cor. v. 19.) "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (ii. 20.) "It pleased the Father that

QUESTIONS.

26. Why was man unreconciled to God?
27. What other influences set man in opposition to God?
28. How did Jesus act to produce reconciliation?
29. How was the word atonement originally written?
30. What other word means the same as atonement?
31. How do the Scriptures show that it was man who needed reconciliation to God?

in him all fulness should dwell: and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, whether things in earth or things in heaven." (Col. i. 19, 20.)

More clearly and beautifully still is the true idea of the Atonement seen in the following passage: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." (Rom. v. 10.) Here we have the idea of the Atonement, or reconciliation, for they mean the same, in connection with the idea of salvation. Jesus came to reconcile all men to God. He came to save all men; and the work of reconciliation or atonement is a part of the work of salvation. In this repentance is necessary; regeneration is necessary; the new birth is necessary; and all are parts of that progress by which the Atonement is effected and the world saved.

QUESTIONS.

32. How many was Jesus to reconcile to God?

33. When all things or all people in the earth and in the heavens are reconciled to God, what will remain in opposition to him?

34. In what passage do we find the idea of atonement, or reconciliation, coupled with that of salvation?

35. Is reconciliation, or atonement, a part of the work of salvation?

36. In this work, what else is necessary?

37. Will it ever be completed?

Because Jesus came to do this work, he is called "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

The Way, because it is by observing and following him that we see the Father in his true character and are made to love him. The Truth, because he spake what the Father gave him to say. The Life, because all those who believe in him, and live as he has directed, have in their souls eternal life. He showed his love for man in deeds of blessed sympathy, — then said, This is an exhibition of my Father's love. He showed his mercy in his undying forgiveness, — then said, I came to do the will of my Father. So did the world learn of God through him; and when the lesson was in their hearts, they were atoned. Men saw the beauty and purity of Christ's life, and fell in love with it. The result was natural; they sought to make their lives like his, — then they were in the road to salvation. They saw how he trusted in God even in death, and they learned to throw themselves upon the bosom of the same loving Father, and in them and for them the Atonement was complete.

QUESTIONS.

38. Because Jesus came to do this work, what is he called?
39. Why was he called the Way?
40. Why the Truth?
41. And why the Life?
42. Of what was the love of Jesus an exhibition?
43. How did the world learn of God in Jesus Christ?
44. What effect did the lesson have upon all who believed in Jesus?

The subject is simple and beautiful. Young friends, if you are not reconciled to God, seek for the Atonement through Jesus Christ.

QUESTION.

45. How did Jesus accomplish the Atonement? State fully.

LESSON XXI.

SALVATION FROM SIN.

The subject of this lesson is replete with interest to every human being. In previous lessons we have talked of the effect of sin; and in our own experiences have had many sad demonstrations of the truth that "the way of the transgressor is hard," and that "the wages of sin is death." Salvation from sin is therefore greatly to be desired; and of the agencies to help us, in securing that salvation, we should all seek to be informed.

Before the birth of Jesus, Mary, his mother, received a visit from one of God's angels, who

QUESTIONS.

1. What can you say of the subject of this lesson?
2. What have we learned in regard to the effects of sin?
3. What then is greatly to be desired?
4. What knowledge should we seek to gain in regard to our release from its power?
5. Who visited the mother of Jesus to announce that he should be born?

announced the fact of his birth and the nature of his mission. That angel said, "His name shall be called Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." It would seem from this fact that the people belonging to Jesus are to be saved from sin, through him.

And who are his people referred to in said passage? This is a question which needs investigation, and one upon which the author of this book may not agree with some of his Universalist brethren; but his views will be set forth in this lesson.

In one sense, all men are to be considered as the people of Christ. He is set before us in the Scriptures as having "all things" given into his hands (John iii. 35); as having "power over all flesh" (John xvii. 2); as having a possession in humanity, co-equal with that of God. (John xvii. 10.)

But the question of the extent of salvation from sin, through him, is not to be decided by such passages; for the fact that in many

QUESTIONS.

6. What was said by the angel of the name by which he should be called?
7. Who, then, are to be saved from sin through him?
8. Who are his people? Is not this an important question?
9. Are all Universalists agreed upon the answer to be given to this question?
10. In a certain sense, are not all men Christ's people?
11. How do you show that truth?
12. Is the extent of salvation from sin to be determined by such passages of Scripture?

places in the Scriptures Jesus speaks of a special or peculiar class as his people, makes necessary still further investigation upon that point. All may belong to Jesus, as a Saviour, in some other capacity. All may belong to him as king; yet not obey his laws. All may be his, to ransom from the power of death and the grave, yet not be his to save from sin?

Let us take, as an example, on the one hand, the little unconscious infant that passes away from life before one thought of evil stains the purity of its soul, and, on the other hand, the vilest sinner who ever left this world with curses on his lips; and does Jesus save either the one or the other from sin? The infant has not committed sin; and how is it saved from sin by Jesus? In its innocence God calls it home, and how can we say that Jesus saves it and the whole class of departed infants from sin? That he saves all such children, we shall show by abundant Scripture testimony in our next lesson; but that he does not save those from sin who are removed

QUESTIONS.

13. Does Jesus speak of classes of men who are his peculiar people?
14. In what sense may all belong to him yet not all be saved from sin by him?
15. Name some classes that are not saved from sin by him in the present life?
16. Why is not the infant saved from sin by him?
17. Can one be saved from that to which he is not subjected?

from this life, the only sinful state of which we have any knowledge, before they are capable of committing sin, is a fact which seems too evident to require other proof than that which is given by good common sense.

And as far as this life is concerned, the abandoned sinner who dies in his soul-guiltiness is not saved from sin by him who was to save his people. Some say that those who die impenitent will be saved from their sins in the future life by the effect of Christ's ministry, as Mediator and High Priest in the immortal state; and, it is proper that you should know that some Universalists hold this opinion. Properly interpreted and explained, it seems not to be unreasonable; but are such infants and impenitent sinners the people of Christ referred to by the angel, who said that he should "save his people from their sins"?

We should hesitate, and consider with attention other facts, before we answer in the affirmative.

QUESTIONS.

18. Is the child that dies before it commits a sin subjected to sin?

19. Is not Jesus, then, a Saviour of those who die in infancy?

20. What can you say of Christ as a Saviour of the impenitent sinner. Does he save the one from sin who dies impenitent?

21. May he not be saved by Jesus from his sins in a future life?

22. However that may be, are such infants and impenitent the people of Christ referred to by the angel?

Are not those Christ's people, in a peculiar and very special sense, who acknowledge him, love, and obey him? The children of Israel were called God's people, in contradistinction to all others, because they worshipped him and recognized his laws. All nations were God's people in one and the broadest sense; yet when he spake of his people, he referred to those who were such in that special sense. So Jesus called all men a gift to him from the Father, his people therefore; yet not specially such, as were the few who followed and loved him.

We may learn of the truth of this statement from many passages of Scripture, to a few of which we will refer. "Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.) "They that are Christ's have crucified their affections and lusts." (Gal. v. 24.) "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

QUESTIONS.

23. Who are Christ's people in a peculiar sense?
24. What illustration of such a special relationship can you name in the case of Israel?
25. Did Jesus have those to whom he stood in a different relation from that which he occupied in regard to others?
26. Name some who are not Christ's in the special sense herein referred to.
27. Name some who are.
28. To whom does Jesus refer as people who had kept God's law?

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." (St. John xvii. 6, 9.) "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John x. 27.) "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me," etc. (Luke ix. 23.) "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 27.) These quotations are a few of many that might be presented, showing that those are Christ's people—his sheep, his disciples—in a special sense who believe in him, and follow him; and it is this class which he saves from sin. So says the apostle.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," etc. (Rom. x. 9.) "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. (Eph. ii. 8.)

The belief which rests in these and other

QUESTIONS.

29. Does he call them his in a special sense?
30. Does he distinguish them from the rest of the world?
31. What does he say of his sheep?
32. What is necessary to make man his disciple?
33. What conclusion follows from the whole tenor of Scripture on this point?
34. What Scriptures can you quote to show that Jesus is the Saviour from sin of those who are his in this special sense?
35. To what life are we confining these inquiries?

Scripture testimonies is very simple and satisfactory. Those who believe in Jesus will love him; for he is a being to claim all the heart's love. If they love him, they will keep his commandments; and if they keep his commandments, they will be saved or kept from sin. They will imitate His example who sinned not. They will draw near to Him in spirit who was pure and gentle, and the power of his gospel and life will save them from sin. Those are his peculiar people who do thus believe and live; and they are his in proportion to their faith and purity.

God, through Christ, is the "Saviour of all men;" but "especially of those that believe." (1 Tim. iv. 10.) Those who believe are saved in the present life, — saved from sin and its penalties, and saved also from the fear of death and the grave. For Jesus came to "deliver those who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 15.)

Such salvation can come only through belief in Jesus, and those who are destitute of a true faith in him are not in possession of that present peace and joy which present salvation confers.

QUESTIONS.

36. How is salvation from sin effected or secured to the sinner?
37. How much are men saved from sin by faith in Jesus?
38. What Scriptures show that those who believe have special salvation?
39. From what, besides sin, did Jesus come to save in this life?

Jesus saves his people. Those who acknowledge him, follow him, love and obey him. They are kept from sin by the force of his example, by their reverence and love for his law; and their fear of death is banished by faith in the resurrection of their Lord.

We believe that all have been given to Christ that he might save them all, with an everlasting salvation; but those, and those only, have special salvation who believe in his name as the Christ of God. The infant that dies in its innocence does not need such salvation, and the profligate that dies in his guilt does not enjoy it in the present life. Those who have true faith in Jesus,—who are his disciples,—who, as his sheep, hear his voice and follow him in the Christian life,—they are saved by him from sin, and are in a special sense his people.

QUESTIONS.

40. Explain, as fully as you can, salvation from sin, through Jesus the Christ?

41. Re-state the doctrine of this lesson, and name any objection thereto of which you can think?

42. Is Jesus a universal Saviour from sin?

LESSON XXII.

SALVATION FROM THE POWER OF DEATH.

During the Mosaic dispensation, the ideas entertained by men in regard tc that change which was called death were dark and gloomy. They believed in a place, or condition, called Hades, or Sheol, a half-real, half-imaginary, altogether indefinable state, where the spirits of the dead reposed: and whether to be such endlessly, or to pass into other bodies, and live upon the earth again, or to be transmigrated to another sphere, or gradually to fade into annihilation, the peoples of the nations were not agreed.

There were some who held the doctrine of transmigration, and set it before the world as a system of religion; yet it was as devoid of system as any doctrine could well be, and rested only in the imaginations of its advocates

QUESTIONS.

1. What was the nature of the ideas which men had of death before the coming of Christ?
2. Where did they suppose that the spirits of men went after death?
3. What did they suppose that place to be?
4. Did they think that the departed dwelt in Sheol forever?
5. Give as good an idea of the ancient belief in Sheol as you can.
6. What can you say about the doctrine of the transmigration of souls?

and believers. Nothing, in nature, sustained that theory, and no revelation sanctioned or suggested it.

The soul of man was not satisfied with the thought of death as an end; it longed for a sphere in which its powers could realize an opportunity for a perfect development, and its immortal desires find something responding to and satisfying them; and it hoped for another life.

The Jews, highly favored with religious knowledge in many respects, were scarcely more wise upon this subject than were other nations, and, longing for something better than they possessed, did actually incorporate the heathen dogma of transmigration into their traditions. Of this last truth we have assurance in the words of the Pharisees to Jesus, on the occasion of one of his miracles: "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John ix. 2.) Evidently his sin could not have been the cause of his

QUESTIONS.

7. Did any of the Jews believe that doctrine?
8. What is there in nature or in the Bible which should cause any one to believe it?
9. Why, then, was it cherished?
10. Does the soul of every one long to live in a life beyond this?
11. Were the Jews more highly favored with religious knowledge than the people of other nations?
12. Why should they have believed in the transmigration of souls?
13. Did not the law or the prophets teach them that there is an immortal life?

blindness, unless he sinned in a previous existence, and that was clearly the idea which the Pharisees had in mind. Again, we may find proof of what is here stated in regard to the vague idea which the Jews had of Sheol, or the place of the dead, in the following passages,

"Are not my days few?
Oh, spare me and let me alone that I may take a little ease
Before I go whence I shall not return, —
To the land of darkness and shadow of death;
To the land of darkness, like the blackness of the shadow of death;
Where there is no order, and where its shining is like blackness."
(Job. x. 20–22.)

'I shall not see Jehovah, —
Jehovah in the land of the living:
I shall see man no more
Among the inhabitants of the land of stillness."
(Isaiah xxxviii. 11.)

"For Sheol cannot praise Thee;
Death cannot celebrate Thee:
They that go down into the pit
Cannot hope for Thy truth."
(Isaiah xxxviii. 13.)

"For in the grave there is no remembrance of Thee;
In the grave who shall give Thee praise?"
(Psalms vi. 5.)

All the Jewish writings are not so dark or

QUESTIONS.

14. What did Job say in regard to the darkness of the shadow of death?
15. If he had believed in a resurrection from the dead, would he have said that?
16. What did Isaiah say?
17. What other saying of his can you quote?
18. Did the Psalmist express his doubts of any knowledge beyond the grave?
19. Are all the Jewish writings as gloomy and despairing as those just quoted?

despairing in view of the future as these passages; but the fact that such expressions fell from the lips of those so favored with religious knowledge as were Job, Isaiah, and David, is significant of the truth we have asserted; and we see that, if the wisest and best men of that age were so full of doubt upon the subject of a future life, the masses of the people must have dreaded death as their last and most fearful foe.

The author of this book believes that Jesus came, not only to give man a knowledge of a future life, but actually to give him that life which he could not have had except through Christ, "who was the first-born of every creature" and the "first-fruits of them that slept." (Col. i. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 20.) At the close of this lesson we will talk of that doctrine; for the author has not presented an argument in relation thereto, or quoted much

QUESTIONS.

20. Are such expressions coming from men like David and Isaiah an indication of the condition of the masses of the people in regard to a knowledge of a future life?

21. How must the masses of the people have looked upon death?

22. What is the belief of the author of this book in regard to the object of Christ's mission?

23. What passages of Scripture does he quote touching that point?

24. Does he enter into any argument in this lesson to prove that his views are true?

Scripture to prove its truth, in this book, thinking that so much space as would be required for that purpose should not be used in advocating a doctrine which is not received by large numbers of our prominent theologians.

He believes that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" that the death here referred to is the same as was spoken of in the assurance of God to Adam: —"In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" that as such death passed upon all men, Adam the first in this ever-dying life, so Christ is the first in that immortality which is promised to all men, through him.

This is the salvation, as he believes, which all the human family are to have in Christ Jesus. In this respect, he saves all.

But, whether that view is the true one or not, we have this direct and unmistakable testimony in regard to the subject of our lesson.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also, himself like-

QUESTIONS.

25. Does he suggest that we should talk in regard to his expressed opinion, and do you wish to do so at the close of this lesson?

26. Why has he not advocated his own views in this lesson?

27. State his views so far as he has stated them.

28. Do all Universalists believe that Jesus is a universal Saviour from the power of death and the grave?

29. What important passage can you quote from Paul touching a deliverance from death through Jesus Christ?

wise took part of the same that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) "I am the resurrection and the life." (John xi. 25.) "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John xii. 32.) "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept; for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. xv. 20, 21.) "For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.) "We shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; (for the trumpet shall sound); and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51–53.) "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven." These and numerous other passages teach the doctrine of a resurrection from the dead, and of a future life in Christ Jesus.

QUESTIONS.

30. What passages from the teachings of Christ?
31. Give us as much Scripture upon this point as you can recollect.
32. What does Jesus say of the resurrection state?

In many places in the Scriptures this resurrection is called a salvation; and this is to be universal. The infant will need this; the idiot will need this; the heathen, who have never heard of Christ, will need this; and this it is which is the free gift of God unto all men.

Because Christ lives, we shall live also. When we consider the darkness in which the Old World was shrouded, and the fear of the grave which was then universal, and then read such words as Jesus and his apostles spake of the future life, we can realize what a salvation faith in those words must have wrought.

"Ye shall not all sleep." Sheol shall not be your abiding-place. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He has triumphed over the grave; he has conquered death; and as he is the first-fruits of them that slept, we shall follow him in the resurrection, and because he lives, we shall live also.

Jews and Gentiles, old and young, high and

QUESTIONS.

33. What is the resurrection called in different places in the Scriptures?
34. How many will need it?
35. To whom will it be given?
36. What assurance have we in the fact that Christ lives in the immortal world?
37. How can we best realize why this is called a salvation?
38. Is Jesus a universal Saviour from death, either in giving all immortality, or in revealing to all the fact of immortality?

low, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female, the evil and the good, shall be saved from the power of death and the grave through Jesus Christ.

We leave the subject here, and in our next lessons of this book shall give the views of Universalists upon the conditions of those who have received immortality through Him who was the first begotten from the dead.

QUESTIONS.

39. In this lesson have we touched at all the questions of spiritual conditions in a future life?
40. Where shall we look for a presentation of that subject?
41. And now what say you of Jesus as the Giver of immortality?

LESSON XXIII.

PUNISHMENT.—HOW INFLICTED ON THOSE WHO DIE IMPENITENT.—HOW CAN SUCH BE SAVED?

CERTAIN questions have been passed over in the preceding lessons with a promise that they should receive attention in another part of this book, and now the pledge must be ful-

QUESTION.

1. What promise has been made in the preceding lessons which should now be kept?

filled. Among those questions was this, the most interesting and important of them all; viz., How is that sinner to be made happy in a future life who dies unrepentant, as did the unbelieving Jews, upon whom came a speedy and terrible destruction? How is such a one to be among the saved in the spirit world?

There are two theories put forth by Universalists touching this subject, and each one finds its advocates. The question is answered by both of them; and it is proper that they should both receive attention in this place.

The early fathers of Universalism, so called, or those who first bore the name, did mostly believe as follows, to wit: —

The sinner is punished in the present life for all the sins of this life. He is justly and fully punished; and if so, God being just in all his ways, that which is here received will be the sinner's only punishment.

To sustain this doctrine the fathers quoted much Scripture, to some of which we will

QUESTIONS.

2. What is the most important of those questions?
3. How many theories are presented by Universalists with regard to this question?
4. What class of Universalists held to the theory which we shall first consider?
5. According to their views, when does the sinner receive his punishments for the sins committed in this life?
6. Upon what fact do they base their belief that in this life only is man punished?
7. State the argument arising out of the fact that the sinner is punished in this life, and from the other fact that God is just.

here refer. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Gal. vi. 7.) "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." (Prov. xi. 31.) "The way of transgressors is hard." (Prov. xiii. 15.) "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (Isaiah lvii. 20, 21.)

These passages clearly speak of punishment for sin in the present life. That punishment is called a recompense. The recompense for sin which God administers is a just recompense (see Heb. ii. 2); and the word itself signifies a full return, or requital, for that which has been done, whether good or bad. So did the fathers in our faith reason; and they concluded by saying that if the sinner reaps "of the flesh" what he sows in the flesh; if, because of his sins, "there is no peace to the wicked" man in this life; if he is indeed "recompensed in the earth," then a

QUESTIONS.

8. Quote the Scriptures that bear upon this point.
9. What do these passages clearly set forth?
10. What is another Scripture term which is sometimes used in the place of punishment?
11. What does recompense mean?
12. If God recompenseth the sinner for his sins, is that recompense just?
13. If it is done in this life, will it be repeated in the future life?
14. State the conclusion to which the fathers in our faith came, and the reasons, therefore, as given upon this page.

just and merciful God will not cause him to reap, in another life, what he has already gathered; or to suffer there what was his recompense of evil in the present state of existence.

But this general statement may not seem to cover the ground presented in the case of the impenitent Jews and other vile sinners, who die in their sins as the Jews did (see John viii. 24.), and a more particular explanation was given by said fathers in our denomination as follows, to wit: —

Man is punished for his overt acts of wickedness, not only with reference to their intrinsic demerit, but with reference also to their tendency in making him a still greater sinner. For example: the Jews were punished, not only for the great sin of crucifying the Saviour, but for every previous sin which acted to harden their hearts, and to prepare them for that act of fearful wickedness; and the punishment received for each and all of those preceding transgressions was measured with reference to the tendency of said sin towards the subsequent great transgression.

QUESTIONS.

15. Does this general statement of the doctrine of punishment reach and cover the case involved in the question first referred to in this lesson?

16. What more particular statement with regard to punishment do we find in the writings of Universalists?

The sin of the crucifixion, according to this theory, was punished in those transgressions that preceded it and prepared the Jews for it, the same as the last desperate act of the drunkard is punished in those preceding acts which make him a drunkard, and prepare him to commit a crime of which, at the time of its commission, he can have no adequate conception.

St. Paul said, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men, they follow after" (1 Tim. v. 24); and this passage seems to refer to the subject under consideration, and to be an authority sanctioning the common-sense view of punishment herein set forth.

We suppose that nearly all intelligent Universalists of the present, as well as of the past, agree, substantially, in this view of punishment for sin; but, as we shall show in an-

QUESTIONS.

17. When were the Jews punished for the sin of crucifying Jesus?

18. How could they be punished for doing some act of wickedness before the act was performed?

19. Illustrate this in the case of the drunkard who does some fearful act in a fit of drunkenness.

20. What does Paul say that seems to teach this doctrine?

21. Can you think of any other case by which to illustrate this idea of punishment for any act in those acts which precede and prepare the sinner for it?

22. Are nearly all Universalists agreed in regard to punishment for sin in the present life?

other lesson, all are not agreed in saying that because every sinner receives in this life a just recompense, that therefore all will stand upon the same platform of equality in holiness as they enter the spirit land. All Universalists agree in saying that "the wicked shall not be unpunished" (Prov. xi. 21), and that God "will by no means clear the guilty." (Ex. xxxiv. 7.) So far as we know, with very few exceptions, Universalists believe that all positive punishment for sin is inflicted in this life; and to the question aforesaid, — viz., When, or how, is the sinner punished who dies in his sins, — who dies, perhaps, after having just committed a fearful crime, — we are agreed in saying that he was punished all the way of his transgression, in every act by which he made himself still more and more depraved, and prepared himself for his latest and most appalling crimes. We are also agreed in saying that such a sinner will be saved in the future life; for Jesus died to save all men (John xii. 47; 1 Tim. ii. 6), and has promised to save all

QUESTIONS.

23. Do all believe that all positive punishment is suffered in this life?

24. Do all, or nearly all, unite in saying that some men's sins go to judgment beforehand, as explained in this lesson?

25. Do all believe that the worst of sinners who die in their sins will be saved in the future life?

26. What is their first reason for believing it?

27. On what Scripture testimony do they rely to prove it?

28. What is their second reason, and why?

men (John vi. 37; xii. 32), and is able to save all men (Matt. xxviii. 18; Heb. vii. 25), and will succeed in the work to his own satisfaction (Isaiah liii. 11); but we are not agreed in saying that such a one will be as well prepared for the immortal state, and stand as high in the scale of spiritual existence, as one who, in this world, had loved his fellow-men, obeyed the law of God, and died with devout prayer or Christian praises on his lips. But this difference of opinion, which does not affect the harmony of our faith in the great doctrine of universal salvation, will be more clearly defined in another lesson.

We are all agreed in saying that there can be no more wicked men upon the earth than were the murderers of our innocent and blessed Saviour, and we say that, if Jesus could pray God to forgive them, then will all be forgiven through the prayer of Him who asketh not in vain of the Father. (John ii. 42.)

QUESTIONS.

29. What third reason is named and what Scripture quoted?

30. And what the fourth reason?

31. If Universalists agree in so many essential particulars, wherein do they differ?

32. Does this difference of opinion disturb in any way the harmony of the demonstration?

33. Where may we expect to find a more particular consideration of this matter?

LESSON XXIV.

PUNISHMENT—WHAT MERITS AND WHAT RECEIVES IT. HOW ARE THOSE SAVED WHO DIE IMPENITENT.

THE views set forth in the last preceding lesson are urged by a class of Universalists for reasons as follows: First, they say that in the future life the spirit will exist in its original freedom from the flesh, and, therefore, should not be made to suffer for sins committed while in the body. They base this proposition upon the words of St. Paul, who says much in his epistles touching the power which the flesh exercises over the spirit. For example, he says, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. . . .

QUESTIONS.

1. Do the Universalists of whom we have spoken in the last preceding lesson have other reasons for their faith than those already named?
2. How, according to their views, is the spirit to exist in the future life?
3. If the spirit is to exist in a state wholly disconnected from the body, what, in the opinion of this class of Universalists, should be its condition as regards punishment for deeds done in the body?
4. What, in their opinion, is the source or cause of sin?
5. Where do they get their authority for such a doctrine?
6. What does Paul say of a contest between the flesh and the spirit?

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." (Rom. vii. 18–23.)

In another epistle he says, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornification, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revilings, and such like. . . . But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance." (Gal. v. 17–23.)

Now the class of Universalists aforesaid say that man is a being of body, or flesh, and spirit; that he is man because he is thus constituted; that, as man, he sins, the inducement or temptation always coming from the

QUESTIONS.

7. What does Paul mean when he speaks of himself and of something which is at war with himself?

8. What are the works of the flesh which are called such by St. Paul?

9. What does he name as the fruits of the spirit?

10. Of what parts is man constituted according to this theory?

11. Is every man, as a man, made up of body and spirit?

flesh; therefore, that sinning as a man and because he is a man, he should suffer, as a man, the consequences of his sin.

In other words, they say that the spirit in its pure and disembodied state should not suffer for that which was forced upon it by the flesh in the human state; and for this reason they contend that all punishment must fall on the transgressor, as such, and not on the disembodied spirit, which ever protested against the sinful act.

We have heard this idea illustrated as follows: There are certain worms whose nature leads them to devour the fresh and beautiful plants and flowers of the garden; they are fearfully destructive, and no green thing is sacred in their eyes. After a time, these worms appear to die; but the apparent death

QUESTIONS.

12. Is it the body that sins as an independent existence?
13. Is it the spirit that sins as an independent existence?
14. What, then, does sin?
15. But does the spirit tempt to the sin, or does the flesh present the temptation?
16. If the sin originates in the flesh, and is finally committed by man as such, upon whom should the punishment fall?
17. What should not be punished for the transgressions of man in the human state?
18. How have some Universalists illustrated this doctrine?
19. Why does the worm eat the fresh leaf, plant, or flower?

is only a process of transformation by which they put off the loathsome form, and rid themselves of the destructive nature of worms, and, spreading their beautiful wings, they claim to be creatures of the air and skies, harmless and inoffensive.

No one would think of punishing the butterfly for what it did when a worm; and so it is said that no one would think of punishing the immortal spirit after it is freed from the flesh, and made like the angels of God in heaven, for what was done by the man in which that spirit dwelt.

The illustration is ingenious and beautiful and, many say, truthful. The class will see at once the conclusion to which such an illustration points. If it is the earthly nature which tempts to deeds of evil, then when that nature is put off, the spirit in its native purity mounts the skies, saying, "When I would do good, evil was present with me;" therefore it was not I that did the evil act, but sin that

QUESTIONS.

20. Why does it not devour the same kinds of vegetation after it becomes a butterfly?

21. Would you seek to punish a butterfly for what it did when a worm? If so, upon what principle? and if not, why not?

22. What do you think of this illustration?

23. Is it wrong for the worm to eat the beautiful plant and flower?

24. If it is not wrong, and if it does this because it is its nature to eat such food, can you talk of punishing it in any way, or in any state?

dwelt in my mortal body. Those who cherish such opinions believe that the vilest sinner becomes, when disrobed of his mortality, as pure as an immortal spirit can be, and therefore fit for heaven.

They quote the language of Paul with great confidence, wherein he says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound); and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (1 Cor. xv. 51–53.) They also rely, and with still greater confidence as a proof of their doctrine, upon the words of Jesus, wherein he says, "In the resurrection, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." They say that beyond all doubt the angels are pure, holy, and happy; and if man in the resurrection is to be like them, if all men are to

QUESTIONS.

25. If it is wrong for man to sin,—not necessary, or in accordance with his nature,—can you properly institute a comparison between his acts of evil and the acts of the worm in satisfying its hunger?

26. What words of Paul, touching the change to be wrought by the resurrection, do said Universalists quote?

27. And what do they say of the justice of a punishment to be inflicted on the immortal for the deeds of the mortal?

28. What words of the Saviour do they quote touching this same subject?

be like them, then all men will be equally pure and holy. (Luke xx. 35, 36; Mark xii. 25; Matt. xxii. 30.)

But all Universalists do not agree in such an interpretation of these last-named Scriptures, and therefore do not quote them to prove that all men, regardless of their character in this life, will be equally holy and happy immediate on their entrance to the immortal state. We all believe that in the resurrection all men will become "as the angels of God in heaven;" that is, that all will be immortal and wholly free from the passions and lusts of the flesh, and therefore that he who dies impenitent enjoys this salvation in common with all others for whom Christ died. But we are not all agreed in saying that such.

QUESTIONS.

29. How do they reason upon these words of Jesus?

30. Do we learn from this saying of Jesus as it comes to us from either of the Evangelists that all men are to be like the angels of God in heaven?

31. If we say that all will not attain unto the spirit world and the resurrection from the dead, then must we not believe that some will be annihilated?

32. But did not Jesus say that if he was lifted up from the earth he would draw all men unto him?

33. Are we not told also that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive?

34. Must we not, therefore, believe that all will be made as the angels of God in heaven?

35. But how as the angels? In what respect?

36. Do all Universalists agree in saying that in the resurrection all will be immortal and free from the power of earthly passions?

a resurrectionized spirit is as holy and happy as that other soul who, through much striving and prayer, lived near to Jesus in this world, and from a sublime moral exaltation went up to his station in the spirit land. We all believe that the worst of earth's wandering prodigals will be reclaimed, and the most degraded and obstinately impenitent will be redeemed, purified from all unrighteousness, and finally brought near to Christ in spirit and life; but we differ in regard to the time of such a consummation, and perhaps in regard to the agencies by which it shall be accomplished. In the next lessons the exact difference in said opinions will be more clearly shown; also the reasons on which certain Universalists rest their opinions, while they decline to accept the exact position which the fathers occupied.

QUESTIONS.

37. But do all agree in saying that he who dies impenitent will be at once equal in holiness to all others?

38. If we agree in the fact of salvation from sin for all the human family, in what do we disagree?

39. What passage gives us assurance that God will welcome home his wandering prodigals?

40. Quote all the Scripture within your memory touching the doctrine of a final salvation for all men.

LESSON XXV.

CONDITIONS OF IMMORTALITY.

We come now to the most interesting subject which can be named in connection with our future state of existence. That we shall be saved, — that the work of redemption will be completed, and the most depraved that have lived upon the earth brought near to Jesus as a consummation of the divine purpose we cannot doubt; but when and how are questions that we need to consider; for certain Universalists believe that man has some agency in that matter, and can do something to determine that time? And first of all, we say that the object of punishment for sin is not, as one theory we have noticed would seem to indicate, the avenging of a broken law, the infliction of so much pain for so much sin, but, as all experience and the whole tenor of the word of God will show, the reformation of the sinner. The parable of the prodigal son, —

QUESTIONS.

1. What is one of the most interesting questions in connection with our future life?
2. What is there in regard to our future life of which Universalists have no doubt?
3. What is there in regard to it which is not fully determined in all minds?
4. What is not the object of punishment for sin?
5. What is the object of punishment?

found in St. Luke's Gospel, chapter 15—shows this to be the true idea, and if we examine Heb. xii. 6–11, Lam. iii. 31–33, Psalms xix. 7–11, 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14, and many other passages touching upon the same general topic, we shall find that God makes the penalty of his broken law an agency to reform the sinner. He scourges because he loves, and he will therefore continue to scourge until the object of punishment is realized in the reformation of the offender.

In other words, when the sinner shall come before the bar of God, be it in this life or in the life to come, the just Judge will not proceed to state the full amount of all his offences, and then to estimate the amount and severity of the punishment he has received, to see if he has had his just due, so that the accounts of life may in that way be squared and settled; but the question will be, Has the punishment accomplished the work for which it was inflicted? Has it made the sinner truly penitent and prepared him to receive and appreciate the divine forgiveness?

There is no such thing as payment through suffering for the wrong done by our sins, and

QUESTIONS.

6. What passages of Scripture can you quote touching that matter?
7. What will not be the question by Him who judges us?
8. What will be the inquiry?
9. Do we, or can we, pay by suffering punishment for the sin we commit?

we cannot see how the resurrectionized transgressor is to plead his punishment, great as it may have been, as a set-off against the charges to be made against him because of his crimes.

There are many Universalists who look upon this subject in this light, and they conclude that if the punishment suffered in this life does not bring the sinner to repentance, then will the same love which commenced the chastisement for the purpose of reform continue it until the end of punishment is realized in the "peaceable fruits of righteousness."

If the guilty one has been humbled and subdued by the infliction of five lashes from the rod of the Almighty, the Judge will not say, His offence was very great, and he must have five more lashes, having regard to the amount of the punishment only; nor, when he looks upon the still impenitent offender, will he say, The full measure of the penalty has been inflicted upon him; let him have place among that throng who have received my forgiveness and approval.

QUESTIONS.

10. Will the pain we endure in consequence of sin be set off as so much toward satisfying God?

11. In consideration of these facts, what do many Universalists believe?

12. If a certain punishment humbles the sinner and makes him penitent, will he be punished more for past sins?

13. If he is not humbled, what fact is apparent in regard to the future?

14. Is there then a fixed amount of punishment for every sin, having endured which the sinner is set right with God?

Common sense rebels against such a doctrine, and as we do not find it set forth in the Bible, we cannot approve or accept it as truth.

Again, as the Bible does teach, most emphatically, that the end of punishment is reformation, we can no more doubt that punishment in some form will be continued until the end is accomplished than we can doubt that such an end will finally be reached.

But some one may say that if the sinner is impenitent as he enters upon another life, then, judging of the future by the present, he may continue in that rebellious state forever, and so, according to our theory, be punished forever. But we have already shown that we cannot judge of the future life by the present life; for here we are subjected to the temptations and lusts of the flesh, while there the spirit will be free from such influences, so that punishment there may produce its speedy, almost immediate results. Getting freedom from the mortal part of our being does not pour any new virtues upon the soul, and there-

QUESTIONS.

15. Do we find any such doctrine in the Bible?
16. What are the teachings of common sense in regard to it?
17. What, then, of the continuation of punishment?
18. What do some say of this as it regards one who dies impenitent?
19. Can we judge of the future life by the present life?
20. If not, why not?
21. How are we to be affected by putting off our earthly nature?

fore death does not exalt us into any new excellency of spirit; but it places us in a state where such excellencies can be more easily and more certainly attained. In view of these things, we are not agreed in saying that all who enter the immortal state have cancelled their moral indebtedness and are equally free from the effects of sin.

One more argument upon this point, let us notice in this lesson. This argument we will rest upon the law of progress, and that law we may state as follows: No man ever yet arrived at any eminence of wisdom, or moral excellence, who did not pass up thereto through every intervening step from the starting-place to the last attainment. This law is well stated in the words of our Saviour, as follows: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." (Mark iv. 28.) It is also well set forth in the vision of Ezekiel, wherein is prefigured the growth and progress of the gospel of Jesus. (Ezek. xlvii. 3–5.)

Let us suppose a case by which to illustrate this law. Suppose the educational authori-

QUESTIONS.

22. What does not death do for us?
23. What, then, of cancelling moral indebtedness in this life?
24. Upon what law can we base an argument in regard to this doctrine?
25. State that law as it is stated in this lesson?
26. How was it stated by the Saviour?

ties of some town or city should make provision by which all the children of a certain age should pass up from the primary to the grammar schools, regardless of their previous attainments; would such a change in position qualify them for the grade of schools to which they should be thus promoted? Would those who had been indolent and negligent in the primary school be advanced in learning one iota by such a change in position? Not at all. They might learn faster after getting into a new and more favorable position; but they would have to begin in the grammar school, just where they left off in the primary department.

Again, suppose that a hundred men of all classes in society should be invited to a grand musical festival, and all receive seats in equally desirable positions. Among such a number there would be men of culture and refinement, and men illiterate and gross in all their tastes and habits, — men whose souls were quickly touched by the inspiration of music and who had studied the greatest masters of that ennobling science, and there would be

QUESTIONS.

27. What case is stated as an illustration of this law?
28. What question arises in that case?
29. Might not such children be favorably affected by the new position?
30. Would the change, in and of itself, make them any wiser or better?
31. What other case is supposed?

others who had never cultivated a love for harmony, and to whom the laws of melody were all unknown.

Would all those men by their equally good position in the concert-room be prepared to enjoy and appreciate alike the musical gems of such an entertainment? We know that they would not. The outward condition would not determine the capacity to enjoy the music. We therefore conclude that when we go up, at God's invitation, to the Oratorio of Redemption in the immortal world, those who know most of redemption here will best appreciate its divine passages as they enter there.

QUESTIONS.

32. State the argument and conclusion in regard to the appreciation and enjoyment of such a concert.
33. State the application to those who go from this to the spirit life.

LESSON XXVI.

CONDITIONS OF IMMORTALITY.

From what appears in the last preceding chapters it will be seen that a certain number of Universalists, we think the greater number, believe that if the humility and prostration of the spirit before God is not realized in the

present life, it will have to be accomplished in the life to come. There is nothing in the Scriptures that limits the time of repentance to this life, and nothing which causes us to think that Jesus may not lead the unreconciled to his Father by the influences of his Spirit and ministration, in that life where he still lives to make intercession for us. Nay, the passage to which these last words refer seems to teach that his mission of salvation is still going forward through his personal efforts in the spirit land (Heb. vii. 24, 25), and will continue until he gives back the kingdom unto God, having subdued all things unto himself and brought all souls to bow in adoration unto the Father. (1 Cor. xv. 25–28; Isaiah xlv. 23; Rom. xiv. 11; Phil. ii. 10, 11.)

This doctrine more than suggests the idea of inequalities in the purity and exaltation of those who shall have obtained unto a resurrection from the dead. Although we are assured that in the resurrection all shall become as the angels of God in heaven, we are no-

QUESTIONS.

1. If the humility and prostration of the spirit before God is not realized in this life, what then?
2. Is there anything in the Scriptures that limits the time of repentance to the present life?
3. Is the mission of Jesus to man limited to this life?
4. What Scripture can you quote touching this matter?
5. What do the foregoing facts and inferences more than suggest?
6. Of what are we assured in regard to the resurrection state?

where told that the equality here suggested is to be that of wisdom or holiness; and we do not think that a careful consideration of the Saviour's words would lead us to any such conclusion.

The passage herein alluded to was an assurance to those who called it forth from the Master, that in the spirit land there were no marriages, because all there are immortal. The earthly nature will not enter the life to come, and consequently the intercourse of soul with soul will be purely spiritual. Human souls will be as the angels in this respect. We therefore believe that the exact position that we shall occupy, in point of wisdom and spiritual exaltation, will depend, under Christ who helpeth us, upon the success we have in retaining, or regaining, if once lost, the purity of childhood, and in preparing ourselves to know of and appreciate all goodness, wisdom, holiness, and glory.

If, in this life, we have learned but little of the glory which God has revealed to us in his works, or in his word, we shall not be perfectly wise in regard to that matter so soon as we enter upon the immortal state. If we

QUESTIONS.

7. Will that equality be of wisdom, purity, or holiness?
8. How will all be equal to the angels?
9. Upon what, then, will the spiritual exaltation in the future life depend, at least, in part?
10. In this life we have learned but little in regard to God's wisdom, love, purity, and glory; what shall we know of God as we enter the future life?

have not learned the value of moral excellence, and have not loved the riches of purity truth, and righteousness, how are we to spring at once into that state where the pure in heart will be our sweetest and most welcome companions? We know that the man of wisdom becomes such by years of effort, begun in childhood and continued through every possible degree of intervening progress. We know, also, that the distance from great impurity, from sinful and degraded life, to the true Christian stand-point is very great, and lies stretched out over every degree of excellence, not one of which can be omitted by him who would arise out of such degradation and attain that other state. And why should this law be reversed as we step over the threshold of time and into the immortal land? We have no answer to this question and do not

QUESTIONS.

11. What shall we enjoy of him as at first we enter that life?

12. If we have not learned the value of moral excellence, if we have not appreciated or loved purity in this life, what question arises in regard to the future?

13. How do men of wisdom become such?

14. How must we reach a stand-point of excellence that is far above us?

15. Can we pass over any step in progress without taking that step?

16. Can a man go at a single stride from great impurity to great Christian excellence?

17. Have we any reason in Scripture, or otherwise, to believe that this law will be reversed as we step over life's threshold into the spirit world?

believe that one has ever been given which was satisfactory to the intelligent mind.

Unless we are to be so changed as to lose our identity, as to become beings totally different from what we now are, this doctrine of inequalities must be true. And shall we be thus changed? Will the mother lose her love for her child? Shall we cease to remember the days and years of social happiness with our chosen friends? Will the brother fail to recognize in his immortalized sister the one who was so gentle, sympathizing, and good, in this world? There is no reason for cherishing such a thought, and we are so repelled by it that we give it no place in our minds or hearts.

We are what we are, because of our love, wisdom, memory, and other powers and qualities of the soul; and, in this respect, if our identity is not destroyed by the transfer, we shall be the same in all our moral qualities when we enter the future life as when we

QUESTIONS.

18. Has any satisfactory answer been given to this question?
19. If we preserve our identity as we pass to another life, what doctrine must be true?
20. Shall we lose our identity? Is it probable?
21. Is it a pleasing thought to feel that it may be so?
22. What makes us what we are as intellectual and moral beings?
23. Will death affect our moral qualities to make them greater or less?

leave this. We shall be free from the flesh and its lusts; but the spirit will exhibit its identity of positive excellences there as here. Each individual spirit—with just the culture it shall have received, with just the moral power it shall have developed, with the identical garments of truth, love, patience, faith, meekness, and purity it shall have put on in this life, with all the characteristics that make it what it is, with all the qualities that determine its identity at the close of its mission in this world—will then assume its spiritual body and live as an immortal. And where can that life begin if not from the exact moral stand-point where this life shall end?

To this doctrine some Universalists urge objections, because, as they say, it leaves no room for the salvation which Jesus came to secure to the world. They say that if we are to learn all and acquire all of wisdom and excellence by which our future exaltation is to be secured, then there is no room left for the work which Jesus came to do for us.

QUESTIONS.

24. Does the Bible give promise of an increase of excellence because of a freedom from the flesh and its lusts?
25. If your cup is emptied of bitterness, is it, therefore, full of sweetness?
26. How must every soul enter upon the future life?
27. Where, then, must the progress of the future life begin?
28. Are objections urged to this doctrine?
29. What is the chief objection?

But how are we to learn but by and through him who is the great Teacher? And where shall we find our example of perfect excellence but in our Lord the Christ? He saves us by his teachings and his life. He saves us if we learn of him and imitate him; and who will tell us how he saves us in any other way? He saves from the power of death and the grave unconditionally. Man has no agency in that salvation. It is universal and absolutely certain. But of a moral or spiritual salvation, who can tell of any other than that to be obtained by learning of Jesus and copying his examples? And if we do not begin to learn of him here; if we display none of his excellences here; if we do not conceive of him as the one altogether lovely and the chiefest among ten thousand while we dwell below the skies, — will there come unto us any spiritual salvation until his glory shall burst upon our immortal vision and we shall see him as he is?

QUESTIONS.

30. What is the answer to this question?
31. Can we work in our moral exaltation without Christ?
32. What can we do, Christ helping us?
33. Is there a salvation through Christ in which man has no agency?
34. What is it?
35. How are we to gain moral or spiritual salvation but by effort to imitate Jesus?
36. Are there not those who do not begin to learn of him in this life?
37. If so, where must they begin?

But the class may ask if we do not base our doctrine on some Scripture testimony. We answer that we do. We think that all the Scripture quoted in the last four lessons, looks to this doctrine as a result. But three passages that may be named bear so directly upon this subject there can be no doubt in regard to their true intent. They are as follows: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.) "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead," etc. (1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.) "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. . . . And he said to me, These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore

QUESTION.

38. What three passages of Scripture can you quote which seem to show that there will be spiritual inequalities in the future life?

are they before the throne of God," etc. (Rev. vii. 9, 14, 15.)

We suppose that the "many mansions" spoken of by the Saviour had no reference to different places or apartments in the spirit world, but rather to certain conditions of enjoyment just suited to the soul's capacities. We suppose that a similar idea is presented in the words "One star differeth from another star in glory." We do not suppose the word "glory," in this place, signifies heaven, but rather excellence, or brightness. And in the words "so also is the resurrection of the dead," man's comparative position, or excellence there, is represented by the stars which differ from each other.

But when we come to speak of the passage in Revelation, the case is still more clear. It was a peculiar throng which stood before the throne. They were of every nation, kindred, and people, but not all of every nation. A still larger multitude had been previously described as present in the spirit world, worshipping and praising God. This throng was, however, the favored one of all others; for they were near the throne. And how came they there? They came up through much ef-

QUESTIONS.

39. Are these three the only Scriptures that bear in the same direction?
40. What was probably meant by "many mansions"?
41. By one star differing from another star in glory?
42. And what of the passage in Revelation?

fort and striving, through much tribulation; and they had made their robes white through faith in Jesus. Those robes were robes of righteousness; not given them by some kind angel after their arrival there, but wrought out for themselves in the conflicts of life. The others, not so near the throne, had not striven so long or so nobly, and they were stars of a different magnitude. "One star differeth from another star in glory." All shine, as stars, and with what brilliancy they have acquired, but not equally.

One company is nearer the throne than another because they are prepared to live nearer to the blaze of the divine glory than others are, — all in heaven but not all equally filled with the spirit and ecstasy of its highest joys, — all drawing nearer to Jesus and acquiring more and still more of his glorious perfections, yet many, very many, only just commencing the journey. Let us strive to prepare ourselves for the most glorious of all the heavenly mansions to shine there as stars of the first magnitude, and to bear up with us, from the conflicts of life, palms of victory and robes of righteousness which shall insure to us places near the throne.

QUESTIONS.

43. How came some nearer the throne than others were?

44. Were they not favored because of what they had accomplished?

45. What have you to say of this doctrine? What questions to ask? What do you believe?

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